

L E T T E R S
O N
THELYPHTHORA:

WITH AN
Occasional PROLOGUE and EPILOGUE.

BY THE AUTHOR.

AUDI ALTERAM PARTEM.

*Yet shun their fault, who, scandalously nice,
Will needs mistake an Author into VICE:
All seems infected that th' infected spy,
As all looks yellow to the jaundic'd eye.*

POPE—Ess. on Crit.

*TRUTH would you teach, or save a sinking land,
ALL FEAR, NONE AID YOU, and FEW UNDERSTAND.*
Ess. ON MAN.

L O N D O N:

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M.DCC.LXXXII.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE AUTHOR requests the READER, not to look on the following sheets as an intended formal reply to the *nonsense* and *ribaldry*, which have appeared against THE-LYPHTHORA. He hopes never to misemploy his time to such a purpose.

If *some* should be duly apprized of the *folly* and *rashness* with which they have written — *others*, of the *spirit* and *temper* with which they have acted; the *chief end* of this *publication* will be answered.

As to the *address* at the top of *each letter*, let not the *curious Reader* be solicitous about it; let him rather advert to the share he may bear in the matter of the *Epistle itself*,

——If it do him right,
Then he hath wrong'd himself; if he be free,
Why then, my taxing, like a wild-goose, flies
Unclaim'd of any man. SHAKESP.

ERRATA.

- Page 82, line 16, for *was* read *were*.
 89, last line, for *these* r. *this*.
 110, line 15, for *than that* r. *than to that*
 111, line 8, for *κορμω* r. *κορμω*.
 112, line 6, for *was* r. *were*
 1b. line 9, for *bad* r. *have*
 115, line 10, add, See PARKH. Gr. & Eng. Lexic. ιδος.
 117, line 25, for *arrested* r. *reversed*.
 128, line 9, for VESTRA r. NOSTRA; —and add—or rather (if the metre would have borne it) what think you of SUA?

P R O L O G U E.

*WHEN first our brave Reformers scorn'd the rage,
 And dar'd the malice, of a Popish age;
 When, by the pow'r of Rome no longer bound,
 They left their chains, and roam'd o'er hallow'd ground;
 When, for tradition's lyes and monkish rules,
 For the false jargon of the quibbling schools,
 They taught this land the SACRED PAGE t' essay,
 And trace where HEAV'NLY WISDOM led the way;
 SCRIPTURE and TRUTH resum'd their antient reign,
 And Romish tyranny oppos'd in vain:
 From mental slav'ry's long and tedious night,
 Bright Liberty came forth, and hail'd the light.
 The Hearts of thousands blest'd the happy day,
 (Those Hearts which ERROR long had taught to stray)
 ERROR's * strong holds by TRUTH were now o'erthrown,
 Raz'd were the ALTARS † of a GOD UNKNOWN:
 O that all foes to TRUTH had met their doom,
 Had all been banish'd to the walls of Rome!
 Then SUPERSTITION's dreams had haunted none,
 But the blind vot'ries of the Papal throne:—
 Fierce BIGOTRY no more could lift its head,
 Nor by FALSE ZEAL the honest mind be led;
 Fell PREJUDICE no more would meanly spy
 Thro' the false medium of her jaundic'd eye;*

* 2 Cor. x. 4.

† Comp. Acts xvii. 23.

*Pervert our meanings—turn our good to ill—
 Pleas'd to oppress, and griev'd she cannot kill.
 The * Proteus, PERSECUTION, had been doom'd
 Ne'er to appear (whatever shape assum'd)
 With fire and sword to waste the lives of men,
 Or skulk Assassin with the tongue and pen.—
 CHRISTIAN INTOLERANTS no more had trod
 The paths of cruelty, as † ways to GOD.*

*SPIRIT OF TRUTH! still farther urge thy sway—
 Still farther brighten our imperfect day!
 O let thy ‡ THREEFOLD CORD our spirits bind,
 § FAITH, HOPE, and LOVE, constrain each || willing
 mind—
 From all our other shackles set us free—
 From ev'ry bond which is not ** knit by THEE!*

* Omnia transformat sese in miracula rerum,
 Ignemque, horribilemque feram, &c.

VIRG. G. iv. Lin. 441—2.

† Comp. John xvi. 2.
 xiii. 13. ¶ Ps. cx. 3.

‡ Eccl. iv. 12.
 ** Col. ii. 2.

§ 1 Cor.

LETTERS

L E T T E R S
O N
T H E L Y P H T H O R A.

L E T T E R I.

To the Reverend Mr. B.

April 4, 1781.

Reverend Sir,

I HAVE the favour of yours, and am extremely concerned, that you express so much displeasure against my book — “ a work (say you) which I never have read, and never intend to look into, or suffer it to come within my doors ; what I have been told of it entirely satisfies me, I have no curiosity to go any farther.” — These are your own words, which I transcribe, and lay before you, for your re-consideration — perhaps, on cooler reflection, you may find some rea-

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son

son to join with me, in allowing, or at least in suspecting, that they want that *candor*, which you, as a man of liberal education—of real honesty—not to say as a *Christian*, ought to have shewn on this occasion. To condemn a book which you have never read, is like the unfairness of determining a cause without suffering the parties to be heard.—I have been considering on what principle of *scripture*, *reason*, *common-sense*, or *common justice*, such a proceeding can be *justified*, or even *excused*.—I cannot find, that it is *doing unto others as you would they should do unto you* *.—An heathen reasoner, *Seneca*, if I mistake not, could say — “*Judex si aliquid statuerit, parte inauditâ alterâ, licet rectè statuerit, haud æquus foret*” — and does not *common-sense* tell us, “*first hear, and then judge?*” Will you dispute the propriety of that question of *Nicodemus* to the *chief priests* and *Pharisees*?—viz. *Doth our law judge any man before it hear him, and know what he doth* †?—*Solomon* saith — *He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him* ‡. But a greater than *Solomon* has forbidden all *rash* judgment in the most pointed and awful terms—*Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment—in*

* Matt. vii. 12. † John vii. 51. ‡ Prov. xviii. 13.

righteousness

righteousness thou shalt judge thy neighbour *.
And again—*Judge not, that ye be not judged;
for with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be
judged, and with what measure ye mete, it
shall be measured to you again* †.

Had you gone no farther than making
up your own mind in my disfavour, on
no evidence but the mere reports of others,
who, perhaps, like yourself, have never
examined the matter, even in this you
would not have *judged righteous judg-
ment* ‡; but when you endeavoured to
prejudice *others*—to make use of the in-
fluence which you have over the minds of
so many poor and ignorant people, to em-
bitter their spirits against me, and to
make even some of my *friends* evil-affected
towards me; you then *meted with a mea-
sure*, by which I hope it will never be
meted to you again; and that it may not, I
would take the liberty of saying, that I
wish you seriously to reflect on your pro-
ceedings, how far they have been from
bearing false witness against your neighbour
(for, to say what is *false*, or what you do
not *know* to be *true*, amount to pretty
much the same) and how sorry you ought
to be, in that you have departed from
that *law of kindness*, which ever has been,

* Lev. xix. 15. † Matt. vii. 1, 2. ‡ John vii. 24.

L E T T E R I.

and I trust ever will be, the *measure* and *rule* of that affection, with which I am

Very sincerely yours, &c.

P. S. In what you say about not reading *Thelyphthora*, nor suffering "it to come" within your doors," you put me in mind of a philosopher of *Flôrence*, whose prejudices had taken so deep root, that he could never be persuaded to look through one of *Galileo's* telescopes, lest he should see something in the heavens which might disturb him in his belief of *Aristotle's* philosophy. See *Jones's* Essay on Nat. Phil. p. 191.

L E T T E R II.

To Mrs. K——.

April 6, 1781.

Madam,

OF all the letters which I have received on this occasion, I cannot single out one, which appears to me so adapted to shew the force of *prejudice*, as yours of the 3d inst. You are so civil, and so charitable, as to say—"I cannot help comparing you to *Voltaire*; you, like him, have written against the religion of your country,

“ country, and to make the laws of the
“ church contemptible; and what you
“ have said against the *marriage-act* does
“ not discover much more veneration
“ for the laws of the *state*.” In short,
Madam, you might have summed up all
this in a much less compass, and called me
heretic and *rebel* at once.

As for *Mr. de Voltaire*, whose works I
have read throughout, I think him the
most ignorant and impudent blasphemer
of the *Bible* that ever yet appeared: but
at the same time, I must set him down as
a lively and brilliant writer, and acknow-
ledge, that no man ever attacked the su-
perstition, folly, and knavery of the church
of *Rome* with so much genuine wit, or
ever placed these in so contemptible a
light, or with so much probability of mak-
ing them ridiculous, as *Mr. de Voltaire*.
Pity, that while the acuteness of his ge-
nius was cutting up the *tares*, the rooted
infidelity of his heart was endeavouring to
destroy the *wheat also*.

Now, Madam, if you can produce me
a single passage from my book, which,
by any fairness of construction, can tend
to lessen that reverence for the holy Scrip-
tures, which, I can truly say, was one
chief design of every volume to inculcate,
I will undertake (like *Mucius Scevola*, when

he had killed one of King *Porfenna's* nobles) to commit (not only the book, but) the hand that wrote it to the flames.— So much for my “writing, like *Voltaire*, “against the *religion* of my country.”

As to “the laws of the church”—so far as they agree with the Scriptures, I hold them in equal veneration—so far as they relate to things indifferent, I would, for peace sake, observe them; but, so far as any of them appear to me to contradict or oppose the law of God, I feel myself wishing for the zeal of our first Reformers to oppose them. So far as they are pregnant with the most apparent mischiefs to the weaker sex, in preventing those claims on their *seducers* which God's laws allow them, and are thus instrumental in their ruin and destruction, I would wish for *Virgil's* hundred tongues and mouths to declaim against them: and so far as “the laws of the church” minister to the cause of *folly* and *superstition*, I could wish for the wit, genius, and spirit of *Voltaire* to laugh them out of the world.

With regard to “the laws of the state,” you may, if you please, apply to them what I have said concerning “the laws “of the church.” As for the *marriage-act*, the frequent attempts which have been

L E T T E R II.

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been made to repeal it, and a bill for that purpose being very probably designed to be part of the business of every session of parliament, 'till it is done, are evidences that I am by no means singular in my sentiments on that subject.

I intended to have added something on the *prejudices* which seem to have such full possession of your mind; but as it would make this letter too long, I must defer it till a future opportunity, adding no more at this time, than that I am,

Madam,

Yours, &c. &c.

L E T T E R III.

To the same.

April 10, 1781.

Madam,

ACCORDING to the expectation which I gave you in the conclusion of my last, I take up my pen again, in order to finish my answer to yours of the 3d instant.

Voltaire, whom you mention, defines *prejudice* to be—*une opinion sans jugement*. *Phillips*, in his dictionary, calls it, *Rash judgment before trial; prepossession*. But I think that *Chambers* explains it best, as—

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a false notion or opinion of any thing, conceived without a due previous examination thereof.

It needs very little argument to prove with what facility *prejudice* insinuates itself into the human mind, or with how much difficulty it can be eradicated: daily experience shews us both the one and the other. Whence arises that proneness to this *vice* (for a *vice* it certainly is) which is observable in us all, it may be difficult to say; but may we not suppose it to arise from a certain *weakness* in the human mind, which in *infancy* we cannot be conscious of, and which in our *riper years* we do not sufficiently attend to, that we may guard against it? However this may be, where shall we find the man who has not taken up some principle or other, and turned it into a *notion* or *opinion* in his own mind, without due examination?

I once knew a learned Physician, who even to the end of his life could never sleep, unless his servant lay in the same room with him. His opinion of *ghosts* and *apparitions* was so strong, that he would almost have thought a man an infidel who had disputed it;—in short, the people who had the care of his infancy had instilled this into his mind, it grew
up

up with him, he never lost it. Many instances of this kind may be given, even in great, and learned, and wise men, in *other respects*; whose folly and weakness in *these* may make us say, with *Lord Chesterfield*, Ah poor human nature!

We may say of *Prejudice*, as is said of the *Jaundice*, it makes us see things, not as they really are, but as represented to our imagination through some false *medium*. When this only affects ourselves, it may, or may not, make us unhappy; this depends very much on the nature of the *prejudice* itself. Our poor old friend Mrs. —, who was so wretched when any body laid their knife and fork across at dinner, as not doubting but it was a presage of some terrible *cross* which was to happen to herself, or to some other of the company, was a very miserable woman: but our acquaintance Mrs. —, who is firmly persuaded that her two sons will make their fortune, because they are *twins*, and an *bive* of *bees* swarmed on her house the day on which they were born, is a very happy one. You know her own birth-day was on a first of *April*; are you sure that her being capable of such a notion was not greatly owing to that circumstance? Pardon me (as honest *Vellum* says) for being *jocular*.

I have

I have spoken of *prejudices* as they may affect *ourselves*, but they are infinitely more serious when they affect *other* people. That I may confine myself to the principal subject between us, I shall speak of those of the *religious* kind, and which, under the influence of a *superstitious* zeal, are not only very disagreeable inhabitants in a man's own breast, but very troublesome, and often dangerous, neighbours to those who live within their reach.

From these, indeed, arise those baleful enemies to the *rights* and *liberties* of mankind, which (if they cannot enslave the *understanding* and *conscience*) will, if in their power, destroy their lives.—I mean *intolerance* and *persecution*. What havoc have these made on the face of the earth! what advantage have they given to the common enemy! what arguments have they furnished against *Christianity*, to those, who, unacquainted with the *thing itself*, have misapplied its sacred name, to the profession of something that has been *so called*. What says *Monsieur Freret*? “ Si Dieu
 “ avait daigné se faire homme & juif, &
 “ mourir en Palestine par un supplice infame
 “ pour expier les crimes du genre-humain,
 “ & pour bannir le peché de la terre, il ne
 “ devait plus y avoir ni peché ni crime :
 “ cependant les Chrétiens ont été des
 “ monstres

“ monstres cent fois plus abominables que
“ tous les sectateurs des autres religions
“ ensemble.” In order to prove his point,
he mentions—“ les massacres, les roues, les
“ gibets, & les buchers des Cevennes ; &
“ pres de cent mille ames périés dans cette
“ province sous nos yeux ; les massacres des
“ vallées de Piemont, les massacres de la Val-
“ teline du tems de *Charles Borromée*, les
“ massacres des Anabaptistes massacreurs &
“ massacrés en Allemagne ; les massacres
“ des Lutheriens & de Papistes depuis
“ le Rhin jusqu’au fond du nord ; les
“ massacres d’Irlande, d’Angleterre &
“ d’Ecosse du tems de Charles I. massa-
“ cré lui meme ; les massacres ordonnés
“ par *Marie*, & par Henri VIII. son pere ;
“ les massacres de la St. Barthelemi en
“ France, & quarante ans d’autres mas-
“ sacres depuis François II. jusqu’à l’entrée
“ de Henri IV. dans Paris ; les massacres
“ de l’inquisition peut-etre plus abomi-
“ nables encor, parce qu’ils se font ju-
“ ridiquement ; enfin les massacres de
“ douze millions d’habitans du nouveau
“ monde executés le crucifix à la main : sans
“ compter tous les massacres faits pre-
“ cedemment au nom du *Jesus Christ* depuis
“ *Constantin*, & sans compter encore plus
“ de vingt schismes, & de vingt guerres de
“ Papes contre Papes, & d’Evêques contre
“ Evêques,

“ Evêques, les empoisonnemens, les af-
 “ fassinats, les rapines des Papes *Jean XI.*
 “ *Jean XII.* des *Jean XVIII.* des *Gre-*
 “ *goire VII.* des *Boniface VIII.* des *Alex-*
 “ *andre VI.* & de tant d’autres Papes
 “ qui passèrent de si loin en scélératesse
 “ les *Neron*, & les *Caligula*.” He re-
 marks, that this dreadful succession of
 religious quarrels for 1,400 years together,
 never subsisted but among the *Chris-*
tians.

Alas, Madam, what shall we say to such
 things? can we *deny* them?—We cannot—
 should we attempt it, the histories of the
 several times abovementioned would stare
 us in the face, and convict us of false-
 hood. Can we *justify*, or even *palliate*
 them? No—every feeling of humanity
 must shudder at them—every principle of
 truth and justice must condemn and ab-
 hor them.

———O what are these!

Death's ministers, not men, who thus deal death
Inhumanly to men, and multiply
Ten thousand fold the sin of him who slew
His brother: for of whom such massacre
Make they but of their brethren, men of men?

MILTON.

But what argument do they furnish
 against the truth of the *New Testament*?
 None—but, on the contrary, a very con-
 clusive

LETTER III.

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clusive and unanswerable one for its most certain truth. These things were *foretold*, they have been *fulfilled*; and to urge the fulfilment of *prophecy*, even in the very *letter* of it, as an argument against the *truth* of the *book* which contains it, is worthy the candour of *Mr. De Voltaire*, and the discernment of *Monsieur Freret*.

When I consider the length of this letter, and how much longer I must make it in order to finish what I have to say on this subject, and, at the same time, that an engagement calls me out, I must bid you adieu; and only add, that, as soon as I can find time to write, you shall hear again from,

Madam,

Yours, &c.

LETTER IV.

To the Reverend Mr. G——.

April 14th 1781.

Reverend Sir,

THOUGH I have not the pleasure of a personal acquaintance with you, yet I esteem your character: and not the less, for the freedom which you use with me

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on the subject of my book. You say, that you “should have highly approved and “admired it, if I had omitted the topics “of *Polygamy* and *Concubinage*.” — In answer to which, I can only say, that writing a treatise, which so much concerns the subject of *marriage*, in all the various forms, circumstances, and modes, in which it has appeared since the beginning of the world, and that on the foundation of the *Bible*, and omitting the topics which you complain of as “being liable to give “offence,” would be like an *anatomist’s* reading a lecture, or publishing a treatise, on the *anatomy* of the human frame, and leaving out some parts of the body, for fear of offending his pupils, or his readers. I trust and hope, that whatever the God of Heaven has deigned to mention in his *word*, I never shall be ashamed either to speak of or write upon. *Offence* may be *taken* at this, but I am sure none is *given*.

You agree with me, that “the crimes “of *adultery* and *seduction* are grown to “an enormous heighth, and if any expedient could be thought on to check “them in the rapid progress they are “daily making, it would be a great blessing.” I would wish you to reflect on the truth contained in this concession, as
it

it may furnish you with an answer to that part of your letter, wherein you ask me, how I “could spend so much time, and “take so much pains, on points which “are settled by the laws of church and “state, and cannot be altered.”—I have read that the laws of the *Medes and Persians* could not be *altered*, but I am confident that the laws of God *ought* not to be *altered*; and that, if the presumption of mankind hath gone so far as to *alter* them, another *alteration* should take place, and they should again be restored to their due honour; this I take to be the only *expedient* for bringing that *blessing* among us which you seem so much to wish for. If we look back something above 200 years, you will find that the laws both of *church and state* were so framed, as, in all human appearance, to leave but an hopeless prospect of *alteration*; yet men arose, who, with the *Bible* in their hands, were *mighty*, through God, *to pull down strong holds*; and now we find, that the laws both of *church and state* protect men in *professing*, what in those days they would have burned them alive for *believing*.

You allow, that “those compulsory “*laws of Exod. xxii. 16. and Deut. xxii. “28, 29. might be very proper among the “Jews, but we are Christians.”* Yes,

but we are men of *like passions with them*, and the *Jews* were men of *like passions with us*; and I own, that I cannot easily be made to conceive, that any laws can be so well adapted to regulate either those passions themselves, or to prevent or punish the bad effects and evil consequences of them, as those which *He, who knoweth whereof we are made*, once revealed as *His will*, most evidently for that purpose.

“But we are *Christians*.”—WELL for us if *we* are, not only in profession, but in *belief* and *practice*; I know no higher evidence of this, than being followers of *Christ* in his zeal and veneration for the laws of His *heavenly Father*, which He *came not to destroy but to fulfil*; He has taught us to believe, that there is not a *jot* or *tittle of the law*, but is fixed on a basis more solid, firm, and irremoveable, than the pillars of *heaven and earth*.

Notwithstanding all this, we are to suppose, that “the new dispensation we *live under*,” as you speak, “has abrogated these laws, and given us others, *more pure, and holy, and perfect*.” Stop, dear Sir, take care, you are at the edge of a dangerous precipice:—*more pure, holy, and perfect*, than what? than the laws of *Jehovah Himself*? Do you mean this?—Given us by whom? a BEING *more pure,*

17

I am, Sir,

LETTER V.

To Mrs. K.

April 20th, 1781.

Madam,

I At last find time to take up my pen, in order to prosecute the subject on which I have already written so much.

We have seen the workings of *prejudice* and *blind zeal*, with their attendants, *intolerance* and *persecution*, as manifested in the short, but dreadful, history of their exploits in the *Christian* world. It is our mercy, that their talons are cut, their teeth are broken, they are restrained of their tyranny, and they can no longer (like
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their father the Devil) go about as *roaring lions, seeking whom they may devour*. That glorious act of *Christian liberty*, that *Magna Charta* of religious conscience, which passed on the accession of *King William* and *Queen Mary*, has banished their tortures, cut down their gibbets, put out their fires. God forbid that this kingdom should ever be *cheated* or deluded into a re-admission of them! I tremble at the very thought!

But though, as matters now stand, these are no longer to be looked upon, or dreaded, as *national evils* among us of this Protestant country—yet the human heart is just the same; *prejudice, superstition, and blind zeal*, and of course *intolerance and persecution*, still come from within, and defile the man; therefore they still will make use of all the power, and of all the weapons which they have left. First, let us say, the *tongue*; this is a very deadly instrument, and well described in the language of inspiration by the apostle *James**, as a fire—a world of iniquity. So is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature, and it is set on fire of hell. The tongue can no man tame, it is an unruly

* James iii. 5.

evil—full of deadly poison. Therewith bless we GOD, even the Father, and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of GOD. Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be.

Another instrument of *intolerance* and *persecution* is the *pen*; this is a still more hurtful engine of mischief than the other; words spoken may be lost and forgotten, but that which is written must remain; and, as it is disseminated and spread abroad, it carries its mischief with it, where we perhaps can never come ourselves. Still worse than all other vehicles of scandal is the *press*, as still more conducive, not only to the spreading and propagation, but to the permanence of that mischief which a man chuses his neighbour shall suffer from him.

How any mortals could ever think, that torturing, imprisoning, burning their fellow-creatures, because they might differ from some commonly-received religious opinion, in their sentiments, could tend to instruction or conviction; or serve the cause of truth; is as absurd as it is wicked and barbarous: this I am certain of, whatever opinion I might entertain of my own sentiments, I should have a very bad opinion of *his* religious system, who could in-

jure me on account of *mine*. — The man who receives, and takes a pleasure, as well as much pains, to spread an evil report of his neighbour, because he does not think with him, certainly does what mischief he *can*; and by the same rule, and from the same motive, that he does this, would still do more were it in his power; no thanks to him that more is not done.

And as this inhuman method of controversy can carry no conviction with it to any reasonable mind, but, as I should think, just the contrary, one should hope the slanderer would be apprized of this, and feel some shame arise from his disappointment. — Not in the least; he writes—he prints—he publishes his venom, and is weak enough to tell all the world of his inconsistency; that *he* is *professing* one thing, *practising* another; *professing* to believe that *book* which commands him *not to raise a false report, nor put his hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness**, and yet doing *both* in the very face of the sun. If this be not a *professing to know GOD*, but *in works denying him* †, I know not what is.

Now, if instead of this, men would

* Exod. xxiii. 1.

† Titus i. 16.

calmly search and try what they hear and read, not by their own prejudices and preconceived notions, but by their *Bibles*, and from thence draw arguments which might tend to convince their opponents, by informing them better, they would at least gain one advantage, that of the approbation of their own consciences, if not the farther advantage still, of being led to the knowledge of some important truth, which before they were either unacquainted with, or had mistaken.

But to what end, after all, doth it serve, to persecute, or revile, or abuse a man, because, in some opinion, he may differ from us?—a reasonable, candid, and calm mind, which has nothing but *truth* for its object, will consider with caution and deliberation, and if it has a *written* and *infallible* evidence, to which it may have recourse, it will fix on *this*; well knowing, that a good man may be mistaken, or a man of an opposite character may be in the right. Where facts are concerned, which only lie in the knowledge of the parties, the good or bad character of a witness must greatly affect his *credibility*; but where there is written testimony, whereon people's interpretations may be different, that written testimony must speak for itself.

Two advocates may argue differently on the construction of an act of Parliament, and in their heat be very abusive on each other; the *judge* pays no regard to this, so as to decide on the part of the man whose talent for scandal and abuse is the most eminent, and of course, against the party who fails in this *accomplishment*; he divests himself of all prejudice, he calls for the act of Parliament, he looks into it, and determines, on the best lights which he can derive from his own judgment and discretion, on the words of the law.—He considers its intention from the * preamble, and construes the several enacting clauses most agreeably to this, knowing that this is the only satisfactory way to his own conscience, to acquit himself uprightly in his office.

Thus should all who have a proper regard to *truth*, and who, like the upright judge, have no other cause to serve, try and examine a publication; not by the prejudices of others, or by their *own*; not by taking offence against the author, because he is reviled and abused, and thus condemn his book because they dislike his character from believing the evil which is

* Lord *Coke* calls the preamble, the *key* to an act of Parliament.

spoken of him ; but they will (if it be on religious opinions) call for the great *Statute Book*, they will compare one part with another, *comparing spiritual things with spiritual* (as the *Apostle* speaks) ; they will not rest their determination on the mere found of words, and this in a translation, of some single text taken by itself ; but they will, if able, first consult the original, that they may know what *GOD really says*, not what a fallible (tho' excellent) translation *makes him say* ; they will construe one part by another, and then, taking the whole together, make up their mind, form their judgment, deliver their opinion.

I have frequently heard an advocate employ all his abilities in brow-beating, abusing, and, by every method in his power, distressing a witness against him ; but I never knew a cause where this was done, that was not *rotten* at bottom ; and therefore, such mean and scandalous attempts to mislead a jury from the merits of the question before them, are usually occasioned from a consciousness of this, and (if the jury are men of sense and honesty) as usually end in the shame of the advocate, and the confusion of his client.

I leave you and Mr. ——— to apply what I say. As to what you observe

about "convincing my adversaries," I can only answer — "*they have MOSES and the PROPHETS, let them hear them — If they hear not MOSES and the PROPHETS, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.*"

One thing I can assure you of, which is, that I had rather forgive and love *one* of them, than bring over a *dozen* of them to my opinion.

I am,

Madam,

Yours, &c.

L E T T E R VI.

To the Reverend Mr. S——.

May 7, 1781.

"Shut, shut the door, good *John*! fatigued I said,
"Tie up the knocker, say I'm sick, I'm dead."

I CAN now conceive what *Pope* is supposed to have felt, when he wrote the beginning of this epistle to Dr. *Arbutnot*; because I have been pestered with letters, some from those *I do know*, some from those *I do not know*, some from those whom I hope *I never shall know*, and some —from

—from people who seem to have but a very slight acquaintance with *themselves*. From the absurdity and folly of most of these performances, I should almost think, that the *Goose*, when bereft of its quills, communicates something of its genius and understanding to such writers: though with regard to many of them, if what is said of the *fretful Porcupine* be true, that he sets up his quills in anger, and darts them at those who approach him, I should imagine, that this animal had furnished my correspondents, if not with instruments to write *with*, yet with the temper they write *in*. But they would be more angry still if they knew *all*; for they have not been able once to put me out of humour, either with *myself* or my *book*. When the wind sits in the south-west, it is apt to whistle through the key-hole of my study, and this is worse to me than all they have said: some indeed have made me laugh, and, like the famous *philosopher* of *Abdera*, *Democritus*, treat their folly with risibility. Others have rather inclined me to be on the side of the *Epheſian Heraclitus*, and to mourn over, what I cannot laugh at, however foolish, because these have levelled their *folly* at *serious things*.

How

How would *Democritus* have shook his sides at the following!—

“ Ravarent Sur,

“ im a oman grifd in spurit at u shud
 “ bee the *other* of LIFFORI it is a grate
 “ finne an the minstur fais as how the
 “ deevil rote it all downe for u an bid us
 “ not rede it as he nevor wud himselfe
 “ he is a god man an wuld not fai foe
 “ if was not tru foe noe more at prafen
 “ from ur affelcted sarvant at comand.”

“ P. S. i wunce thout u an angle.”

Don't you think a *Minister* well set to work, to warn his congregation against a book which he *never* has red, and which three-fourths of them *cannot* read? he certainly spent his time about as profitably, as Dr. —, who preached, to the malefactors at *Oxford*, the condemned sermon, in which he very *learnedly* explained the dimensions and proportions of *Solomon's Temple*, to the no small edification of two or three poor wretches, with ropes about their necks, and who had not 24 hours to live.

I seldom pay the least regard to anonymous letters; they deserve, and therefore are committed to, the fire; but the above is a real treasure, for it contains the *quintessence* of all the *candor*, *good sense*, and *liberality* of *sentiment*, which the *post* has brought

brought me from many quarters. We have also, in the above, a sad emblem of the dominion such *Minsturs* have over the understandings and consciences of their poor ignorant hearers. I have no sort of doubt, but such an ignorant creature as this firmly believes that "*liffori*" was "rote downe by the *deevil*," and maintains it, almost as an article of her creed, that whatever her *Minstur* says must be true, and if the aforesaid *Minstur* should veer about, and declare that it was "rote by an *Angle*," she would believe it just as firmly, and I should become an *Angle* once more in her opinion.

For my own part, I think, that where *ignorance* is the *mother* of *opinion*, it must be also, in a great measure, the *mother* of such people's *devotion*.—*Bishop Burnet*, in his *History* of the *Reformation*, somewhere observes, that the *sermons* of the *Popish priests*, and *monks*, who were in high esteem and credit with the ignorant vulgar, did more harm to the *Reformers* than any thing else. As to the *Minstur*, who could be capable of such an assertion concerning a book which he never read—Mr. W——, who, you know, has quarrelled with almost every *consonant* in the *alphabet* which presumes to begin a word, would say, that such a *mum-mum-inister* is
more

more worthy of a pe-pe-pe-pe-illory than
of a pou-pou-pou-ulpit.

Pray give my best compliments to Mrs.
S——, and believe me

Yours, &c.

“The other of *liffori*.”

LETTER VII.

To the Reverend Mr. Y——.

June 4, 1781.

Reverend, and dear Sir,

OUR friend Mr. T—— brought me
yours of May the 30th: though this
be the date, yet the length of it rather
makes me suppose, that *more* days than
one were employed in writing it; however,
it contains nothing new—*nil dictum quod
non dictum prius*. I always thought you a
good-natured man, and have seen you
under circumstances, wherein your temper
and conduct seemed to give me the highest
confirmation of that opinion. I would
not *easily* be persuaded that I have been
mistaken; but there are many parts of your
letter, which savour of a bitterness of
spirit, and violence of temper, which have
evaporated on this occasion, and too plain-
ly

ly convince me, that you are more like *other people* than you think yourself, or than I once thought you to be. But what is still worse than any thing you have said to me, is, that you have set yourself in the *scorner's chair*, and have indulged your vein for pleasantry by ridiculing *sacred things*.

As far as you endeavour to set me right where you think me mistaken, I take it kindly; in this you are my *friend*, and the more pains you take to “consider the “matter,” the more am I obliged to you; but when you lose your good-humour, grow angry and abusive, and make use of unhandsome language, to convey very indecent and cruel insinuations, you act as *my enemy*, but are, indeed and in truth, much more *your own*. You break through that divine command—*Let all your things be done with charity**—you lose sight of that lovely *grace*, so beautifully described 1 Cor. xiii. and seem to forget, that, without it, we are *nothing*, and indeed *worse than nothing*, before God. I have learned, said good Bishop Hall (or Beveridge, I forget which) to *be angry and sin not* †, by being angry at *nothing* but *sin*; and indeed, this is the only justifi-

* 1 Cor. xvi. 14.

† Ephes. iv. 26.

fiable object of anger.—It is recorded of our *Blessed Saviour*, that *He looked round about on them* (his bitter foes the *Pharisees*) *with anger*—then follows—*being grieved for the hardness of their hearts**.—I wish you to make your use of this, and to improve it for your instruction; if it should make you *angry* with yourself on this occasion, it will do you *no harm*, but if it should prevent you from being angry at other people, it will do you a great deal of *good*.

Ira furor brevis est.—I therefore no more mind what a man says when he is *angry*, than when he is *mad*.—The effects of these are pretty much the same, but the causes of them are very different; the one is a *disease*, and, like others, involuntary and accidental; the other arises from a *sinful* principle in our fallen nature, which kindles its fire from our *pride*, augments its flame from our love of *revenge* for some *supposed injury* offered to our *supposed dignity*, and at last blazes forth in acts of violence towards the persons of our fellow-creatures, either as to their bodily hurt, the destruction of their peace, reputation, and good name, and even, in some instances, to the destruction

* Mark iii. 5.

of their lives. Under the influence of this, the tongue (as St. James * speaks) *becomes a fire—a world of iniquity—sets on fire the whole course of nature, and is itself set on fire of hell.* What the Apostle here says of the *tongue*, we may say also of the *pen*; it is equally true of the *press*—and, as a proof of these positions, I would hold up *certain letters, yours particularly, and certain pamphlets*, to view, and say—ECCE SIGNA!

As to your long stricture, and the appeal you make to other people's notions on the story of the *woman of Samaria*, you must excuse my dismissing it with a very few words. I do not form my conjectures of the passage from prejudice of education, or from any other prejudice of any kind, nor from “primitive fathers, “*faithful church-histories of antient time* “ (Query which be *they?*) the canons of “the church, the decrees of councils,” from the first that ever was held since the *Apostles'* time, to the council of *Trent*, or any later council inclusive; nor from 26 Geo. II. c. 33. nor any other *tradition* of men, which I believe to have been all equally out of the contemplation of *Christ* in what he said, and therefore all equally

* See James iii. 5, &c.

out of the question: but I form my judgment on the *basis* of the *Jewish law*, by which I mean, the law of God delivered to *Moses*, and by him to the *Jews*; and I form *my* judgment on *this*, because I know no other on which our *Blessed Lord* ever formed *his*. Now, if *consistently with this Law*, you can prove, that every woman who was married to a man who had a prior wife living, *had no husband*—or that every woman who cohabited with a man, without some outward rite or ceremony first performed, *had no husband*—then you will not only, in part at least, prove your point, but thoroughly establish that sentiment of *Monf. de Voltaire*, which he borrowed from *Lord Bolingbroke*, viz. *L'Histoire Juive n'est qu'un tissu de forfaits consacrés*; or, in plain English—that “the
 “ Jewish history, as recorded in the Old
 “ Testament, is no better than a com-
 “ plication of consecrated crimes.”

You must permit me, without entering any deeper into the controversy, to conclude with the following argument, which I mean as a full and final answer to your four pages on the subject.

Whatsoever is not consonant with the law of God, as delivered in the Old Testament, is not the true interpretation of any Scripture.

But

But your interpretation of Christ's words, *John* iv. 17. is not consonant with the law of God, as delivered in the Old Testament.

Ergo, It is not a true interpretation of the passage in question.

Or,

Whatsoever contradicts the Old Testament, cannot be a true interpretation of any passage in the New Testament.

But your interpretation of CHRIST's words, *John* iv. 17. contradicts the Old Testament.

Ergo, It cannot be a true interpretation.

You may, if you please, transfer these arguments to your interpretation of *μοι-χαται*—*committeth adultery*, *Matt.* xix. 9. and to your strictures on *1 Cor.* vii. 2; nor can I imagine that you or I, or indeed any body else, will read the New Testament so as to understand it (in very many places) unless we take the Old Testament for our interpreter. Be assured, that God's word is the best comment on *itself*.

Wishing you all happiness, *that especially which results from a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price*, I remain,
Yours, &c.

P. S. See *Whitby's* note on *John* iv. 18.
—and *Pole Syn.* on verse 17, 18; where

D

you

you will find no small justification of the supposition in *Thelyptbora*—that she had *another* husband *living*. This from *Grotius*—*Lightfoot*—*Maldonatus*.

L E T T E R VIII.

To W. D. Esquire.

June 17th, 1781.

My dear Sir,

WE are highly entertained with your letter; the verses are *excellent*. How happy am I, to think that *Thelyptbora* has occasioned so much erudition and entertainment! has brought to light so many geniuses for criticism, both in *verse* and *prose*, which, but for this occasion, might have deprived the world of much instruction and amusement, by living and dying in total obscurity: now they have holden themselves forth to observation. The *worst* (perhaps you'll say the *best*) is, that their fires are too *bright and dazzing*, (or, if you please, too *glaring*) to bear much looking at, and too *fierce* to last long.—They seem to me to make no sort of scruple as to what they say—or write—true or false—sense or nonsense—any thing that comes uppermost will fill a pamphlet, and serve for *abuse*. Like *Sir John Falstaff's* ragamuffins

ragamuffins — “ Tush,” faith he, “ go
“ to—mortal men—mortal men—they’ll
“ fill a pit as well as better men.”

As for *scandal* and *abuse*, they are the very life of the cause; they commonly *sell well*: a *panegyric* would moulder in a bookseller’s shop, while a *libel* was going through a dozen editions. This sort of authors apply *abuse*, as some *brewers* are said to do the poisonous berry called *cocculus indicus*, when they would give a colour of strength to their beer, and in order to save *malt* and *hops*; so these writers, to make up for deficiency of sound argument and pertinent observation, deal in scandal and abuse, not at all concerning themselves, like the aforesaid *brewers*, what mischief they are doing to other people.

I would excuse the badness of Mr. —’s *rhymes*, if he would but have given us a little *reason*; but where there is neither *rhyme* nor *reason*, he must excuse my answering, and that for the best of *reasons*, which is, that I cannot understand him. I dare say he thinks he understands *himself*, so let that suffice.

Did you ever meet with the curious Epitaph on a *Mrs. Greenwood*, at *Soly-hull*, in *Warwickshire*, said to be written by a *Dr. Greenwood*, her surviving husband, and *Rector* of that *parish*? If not, you will be pleased to see it, as a very in-

genious model of that kind of writing, in which the verses which you send me are composed—*Le voici*—

“ O cruel death ! thou hast cut down
 “ The fairest *Greenwood* in all this kingdom !
 “ Her virtues and her qualities were such,
 “ She really deserv’d a Lord or a Judge ;
 “ But her great piety and humility
 “ Made her prefer a Doctor of Divinity :
 “ For which heroic action, join’d to all the rest,
 “ Made her justly be esteem’d the Phoenix of her
 “ sex ;
 “ And, like that bird, her young she did beget,
 “ To comfort those her loss has made disconsolate.
 “ Now my grief for this good woman is so sore,
 “ That really I can write but two lines more ;
 “ For this, and for one other good woman’s sake,
 “ Let never blisters be apply’d to a lying-in wo-
 “ man’s back.”

I desire you will give my compliments to Mrs. D——, and tell her, that I hope she will no longer praise Mr. ——’s *satire* on Thelyphthora, for its *originality* in point of *rhymes*—Dr. *Greenwood* certainly led the way, and Mr. —— has followed, at an humble distance, it is true, but still is an imitator of the above great original.—I think *both* should be inserted in the next edition of *Byshe’s Art of Poetry*, for the benefit of young students in *rhyme*, whose genius leads them either to the *satyrical*, or *elegiacal* and *monumental* species of composition.

I look

I look on such *satyrists*, whether in *verse* or *prose*, to be of the *flea* kind, full of *venom*, but without power of doing any hurt that is essential; therefore you will give me credit, when I assure you, that I esteem the *verses*, and the two *pamphlets* which you send me, as of no higher consequence, either to *me* or my *book*, than so many *flea-bites*. I might carry on the *metaphor* still farther, and add, that as *dirtiness* is said to breed *fleas*, so low, narrow, ignorant, mean, prejudiced, and illiberal minds, breed this kind of *criticisms*.

As for your “*periodical critics*,” as you style them, they are the growth of other countries as well as this; *abuse* is a very profitable branch of their trade, which, but for *this*, would be very slack, for reasons which I have observed before in this letter; it is their *vocation*, and you know “it is no sin for a man to labour “in his *vocation*.”—*Voltaire* says—“Le “monde est inondé des sotises de ces foli- “culaires, qui mordent parcequ’ils ont “faim, et qui gagnent leur pain a dire “des plates injures.” Of others he says—

“ Et ces gredins, qui, d’un air Magistral,
 “ Pour quinze sous grifonnant un journal,
 “ *Journal-Chretien*—connu par sa sotise,
 “ Vont ses quarrant, en princes de l’Eglise.”

I return you your *Gospel Magazine*;
and am,

Dear Sir,

Yours, &c.

LETTER IX.

To the same.

July 4th, 1781.

Dear Sir,

I HAVE received yours of June 30th, in answer to mine of the 17th. — You say, that I should have spoken more respectfully of your “*periodical critics*,” for that “you are credibly informed, that “a certain *Right Reverend Prelate* wrote “the articles on *Thelyphthora*.” — Where you had your intelligence I cannot say, but I think it rather an ill compliment to his lordship that you should credit such a report. Every body knows that his lordship is learned, polite, and sensible — no writing could therefore come from him, totally divested of even a trace of good-manners. Nor could the masterly, elegant, and judicious author of the *Prælectiones*, turn quibbler upon words, or endeavour

vour to persuade us, that, because $\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha$ or Προσκολλω “ mean simply and literally *attachment* and *adherence*,” when taken alone, therefore they are not to be understood as expressive of a particular kind of *attachment* and *adherence*, when found in connection with a subject which must import it. Nor would he, in support of a *quibble*, have sent us to Deut. iv. 4. Josh. xxiii. 8. to help himself out with a false conclusion; viz. that, because the *adherence* and *attachment* there expressed by the word $\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha$ —cannot have a *carnal* idea, therefore it has not such an idea Gen. ii. 24. where the *junction* of the *man* with his *woman* is the subject, by which they become *one flesh*. His lordship could be no stranger to that invariable rule of right interpretation — *Talia sunt prædicata, qualia ex præmissis suis permittuntur esse*.

As a sensible man, he could never garble a parcel of incoherent and unconnected passages together (as *Sancho* did his proverbs) and all this to prove, in fact, that the *adjective* *idios* is not *emphatical* where it is *not* found, therefore it is not *emphatical* where it *is* found. Nor would the judicious and learned *Prelate* have told us, that the verb $\epsilon\chi\omega$ to *have* (which has almost an infinity of meanings) “ simply means *present tenure*, and *possession*; ergo,

“ it does not signify to *possess, retain,*
 “ which is to *continue* the possession of.”
 How a man can have *present tenure* and
possession of a thing, any longer than he
possesses, retains, or continues the possession of
 it, and so *vice versa*, I believe to be be-
 yond the learned Prelate’s understanding
 to discover.—Therefore, for these, and for
 many other reasons, which arise in every
 part of the *critique*, I do conceive the
 whole to be the genuine, pure, unadul-
 terated, manufacture of *Grub-street*.

I have neither time nor inclination to
 enter farther into “ the temptation to con-
 “ troversy” which you *lay before me*, with
 respect to the *pamphlet* you mention. Lay
 your *Bible* open *before you*, consult the
 texts which he quotes, and if they do not
 give you a complete and sufficient refuta-
 tion of all he says, they will do less for
you, than they have done for

Yours, &c.

P. S. *Ar. Mont.* does certainly render
 the passage in Deut. iv. 4. by “ *adbæ-*
 “ *rentes IN Domino*” — and that in Josh.
 xxiii. 8. by *IN Domino adbæreatis* — and
 very rightly, as most agreeable to the *He-*
brew idiom, and to the meaning of the
 text. If you ask me, what is meant by
adhering IN Jehovah? I refer you, for a
 spiritual

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spiritual exposition of it, to John xv. 1, &c. where our *Blessed Saviour* sets it forth under the emblem of the *adherence* and *abiding of branches* IN a vine. — Paul writes to the church of the *Thessalonians*, as — IN God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ *. — He speaks of some that *were* IN CHRIST (ἐν Χριστῷ) before Him †. By all which passages, and others which you may easily refer to, is held forth to us, that real, though mysterious, union of the soul with the *divine object* of its faith, hope, and love: insomuch that he who is *joined to the Lord*, or, according to the *Hebrew idiom*, *adhereth* IN the Lord ‡, is one spirit.

L E T T E R X.

To the Reverend Mr L——.

August 4th, 1781.

Reverend Sir,

I Am sorry to find that a person of your age, experience, and knowledge, should suffer himself to swim with the stream of prejudice and vulgar opinion. Your notion, that, “if my book was true, it “ would not be so generally opposed,” is

* 1 Thess. i. 1. and 2 Thess. i. 1. † Rom. xvi. 7.

‡ 1 Cor. vi. 17.

rather

rather extraordinary, and, if carried as far as it may reach, would go near to shake the truth of every *doctrine of the Reformation*; for that these were *generally* opposed, cannot be denied. We might go *higher* still, and, if *general* opposition disproves the truth of any system, what shall we say to the *Gospel* itself? Was not this *generally* opposed? Did not the *Jews* so *generally* oppose it, as to leave, comparatively, very few that espoused it? Did not *the heathen* rage, and *the people* imagine a *vain* thing? Did not *the kings of the earth* set themselves, and *the rulers* take counsel together against *JEHOVAH* and against his *CHRIST* *? Are not the great and fundamental doctrines of the Scriptures *generally* opposed at this day? yet, do you therefore doubt of their truth? It is a great misfortune, when we suffer *popular opinion* to be our *Pope*, and to dictate what we shall or shall not believe.—Cross the sea to *Calais*, and you will find this same *Proteus* assuming a very different shape from what it bears in *England*; you will carry with you opinions, which you will find “*generally*” (perhaps *universally*) “*opposed* ;” but are they therefore not true? See whither your argument tends.—If you think me mistaken, set me right from the *Bible*; as for all other arguments, than

* Psalm ii. 1, 2.

what are found there, or may be proved therefrom, they are less than nothing, lighter than vanity, where religious truths are concerned. You might therefore have spared all your learned quotations from the works of *men like ourselves*; all the foundation of every thing I believe on these, and all other religious subjects, is contained in one single word—*γεγραπται*—*It is written*. What this man says, or what that man says, may appear mighty *wise*; but, as *fallibility* is the lot of human nature, I chuse to build my *opinions*, not on the *sand* of human authority, but on the *rock* of *divine revelation*. As, therefore, all my religious opinions are founded *upon*, and circumscribed *by*, the canon of Scripture, you have but to observe this with regard to your arguments, and then we shall meet on fair and equal terms.

Human opinions are very apt to change with the times, or as it may appear for the interests of the disputants to vary in sentiment. When King Henry the VIIIth wanted to marry his brother *Arthur's* widow, then it was determined by the great, and wise, and learned, that a contract without consummation wrought no marriage. When poor Queen Catherine was to be divorced, then the contrary doctrine prevailed. Thus in the case of
Anne

Anne Boleyn, when she was condemned to die for *adultery*, they first divorced her, by determining her marriage with King Henry *null* and *void*, by reason of a *precontract* with Lord *Piercy*, though no *consummation* followed. — If this was law, how could she be guilty of *adultery*? for she never could have been a lawful wife to the King, there being no lawful marriage. And if she was to be beheaded for *adultery*, how could they declare her marriage *null* and *void*, since on the reality or validity of her marriage her crime of *adultery* must depend? If married to the King, she might commit *adultery*; if not married to the King, she could not commit *adultery* against him.

This, as well as numberless other instances, may suffice to shew, what an uncertain guide we follow, when we fix on the determinations of human opinion, or rely on the decisions of men like ourselves for what we believe.

The Scripture saith not in vain — *Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of**?

As to “ what the *church* has determined ” — this is still referring me to

* *If. ii. 22.*

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what *men* have determined, and is as good an argument for *Transubstantiation*, as for any thing else. But you mean the *Protestant church*;—it may be so; but if we were to count noses, the church of *Rome* would out-determine us in every article that you and I believe to be most essential to the souls of men. Therefore, as for your “*argumentum ab ecclesiâ*,” you have my free leave to send it from whence it came, for I will have nothing to do with it.

With my compliments to Mrs. L. and your brother,

I remain,

Yours, &c.

L E T T E R XI.

To the same.

August 20th, 1781.

I N return for my long letter of the 4th instant, you send me, *inter alia*, a very long word—*Latitudinarianism*.—If by this same—*ism*—you understand, with many, that “it does not signify what a man’s religious principles are, so that he has
“ some :

“ some: or, that one set of opinions may
 “ be just as good as another, there being
 “ no certain rule to determine who is
 “ *right*, and who is *wrong*”—I most cer-
 tainly disclaim any sort of title to the
 aforesaid—*ism*—and so must continue to
 do while I believe the *Bible* to contain the
 mind of God, or that *Jesus Christ is the*
way, the truth, and the life—none cometh
*to the Father but by Him**.

But if by your—*ism*—you would infi-
 nuate, that I do not confine the salvation
 of God to any sect of *Christians exclusively*
 of others, or imagine that a *believer*, who
worships God in spirit and in truth, whe-
 ther in a national establishment or out of
 it, is not *such* a one as the *Father seeketh*
to worship him †:—or if you would charge
 me with maintaining, that it is every
 man's birth-right to examine for him-
 self—to see with his own eyes, and not
 another's—that it is his *privilege* to be
 able, and his *duty* to be willing, to search
 into the very bottom of whatsoever is
 represented to him as the objects of his
 faith:—in these cases I plead *guilty* to
 your charge; and plead also the examples
 and precepts of the holy Scripture for

* John xiv. 6.

† John iv. 23.

my full and ample justification. *Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?* (said the blessed Jesus)—*whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother* *. So much for bigotry.—*Search the Scriptures* †, saith Christ.—So much for taking things upon trust.

Bigotry, and an intolerant persecuting spirit, usually go together, and have rendered the history of the church, as handed down to us by ecclesiastical historians, the most horrible and disgraceful of all the accounts we have of the pride and cruelty of mankind; bad enough, God knows, through their own corrupt and miserable nature—but when this is inflamed, and set at work by a bigotted, narrow, proud conceit, that — *The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are these* ‡ — then they will kill you, and think that they do God service ||.

O happy England! thrice happy Protestant land! where these scenes can no longer be exhibited! If they could, I am persuaded that they would—*idem semper agit idem*.—Bigotry is still the same—Popery is

* Matt. xii. 48, 50.

† John v. 39. comp. Acts xvii. 11.

‡ Jer. vii. 4.

|| John xvi. 2.

still the same—a persecuting spirit will ever follow *both* wherever they come, and do all the mischief they *can*. If they cannot touch the properties, the persons, the lives of *dissentients*, they will wreak their malice on their *peace*, on their *characters* or *reputations*—and, by doing all the mischief they *can*, prove very fully that they would do more if they *could*. You know the history of that judicious, learned, and excellent man, *Richard Hooker* of blessed memory, and how he differed in certain opinions from his bigotted and hot-headed adversaries Mr. *Travers* and his party—on this account, as they could not refute his Christian and charitable arguments for the salvation of certain persons, which *Travers* was for consigning to inevitable damnation, he was sadly reviled:—afterwards there were parties found wicked enough to raise a slander against the reputation of *Mr. Hooker*, even charging him with a crime of a very malignant nature. Under this heavy burden did he groan many months, till he communicated it to his friends; who, by their assiduity, found out the fraud, brought his accusers to shame, and made them beg his pardon.

Now, can you doubt, that, if there had been a power in these men to have destroyed the *life* of the accused, they would
not

not have done it? or that the same spirit of *bigotry* and *persecution* doth not exist in every man, who can take a pleasure, a malicious satisfaction, in striking at a man's sentiments, by stabbing his reputation? And, after all, what is proved hereby?—Was the slander on *Mr. Hooker* any refutation of what he had advanced in his dispute with *Travers*? was it, even suppose it had been true, any answer to his book on *Ecclesiastical Polity*? If the most notorious *thief* was to say at the gallows, *Thou shalt not steal*—would not this be just as truly and really the command and word of God, as when *Moses* delivered it to the people at *Mount Sinai*.

But why should sinful men complain? why should wretched flesh and blood find fault with such treatment, when we see it levelled against the only perfect, spotless, and immaculately-holy character, that, since the fall of *Adam*, has ever appeared on earth? No sooner did the *Blessed Jesus* attack the *traditions* of the *Pharisees*, and exalt the *law* of God against them—no sooner did he expose their hypocrisy and wickedness, in making void the law of *Moses*, through the *traditions* of their elders—but—*Behold a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber—a friend of publicans and sinners!*—If some said, *he was a good man*,

E

others

others answered, *Nay, but he deceiveth the people.*—They even represented him in league with the devil, *He hath a devil, why hear ye him?—He casteth out devils by Beelzebub the prince of the devils.*—Why was all this? Because they could not resist the spirit and wisdom with which he spake, when he opened and alledged the things that were written in *Moses* and the *Propbets*—they therefore endeavoured to supply by obloquy and abuse, what was wanting in fair disquisition and argument.

The same cause produces the same effects; it always *has*, it always *will*—but all this is just as logical and conclusive, in point of argument, as if a man was to assert that the *three angles* of a *triangle* are equal to *two right angles*, and another was to dispute it, and say it could not be so, because the asserter was a *felon convict*. And what then? a Geometrician, with a few strokes of a pen, would prove the truth of this assertion beyond all power of doubt.

On the contrary, if the man highest in reputation for wisdom and knowledge, virtue and piety, was to assert it, as his opinion, that the *geometrical figure* which we call a *triangle*, was antiently in the days of *Moses* a *quadrangle*; though he were to quote every *saint, father, council,*
&c.

&c. that ever existed, as his authority, yea, was to produce two or three texts in the New Testament, so construed as seemingly to support the same doctrine, yet, while I have eyes in my head, and a grain of understanding in my brains, I should, without the least hesitation, pronounce it absurd, contradictory, and impossible.

If the *Religious* therefore should think fit to abuse me, and calumniate me still more, if possible, than they have already done, and should still farther violate their duty to God and their *neighbour*, by more *railing* and *evil speaking*; and this with more bitterness and malice, than they have already shewed, it would not alter one single sentiment of mine on any subject in *Thelyphthora*, because it is no answer to any one argument therein contained; how far it might tend to alter my sentiments of *religious professors* still farther, is another question.

At present, I have nothing more to add, than that I am

Yours, &c.

L E T T E R . XII.

To the same.

September 9, 1781.

NOtwithstanding all you say, I still remain a staunch *Whig* as to religious matters; I still insist on freedom of *enquiry*, freedom of *thought*, freedom of *opinion*; and if you could add twice as many letters to the *seventeen* in your long word *Latitudinarianism*, it would not then be long enough to frighten me from my sentiments.

In the first place, without freedom of *enquiry*, into every ground of evidence which we can come at, how can we be sufficiently informed, make up our minds, or determine our judgments aright? how can we *properly* obey that precept—"Be ready always to give an answer to every man, that asketh you *a reason* of the hope that is in you *?"

The poor *Papists* are kept in darkness and ignorance; the *Scriptures* are taken from them, they cannot "*search them*:" there is therefore no *free enquiry* to be had; if there were, and it were made a

* 1. Pet. iii. 15.

proper use of—exercised in its full extent—*Popery* itself must be demolished. What else, under *Providence*, but this, brought about the *Protestant* reformation?

When I hear a man say, he believes a thing because the *fathers, councils, canons* of the *church*, or any other *human authority* has decreed it, it reminds me of a story, which I have somewhere met with, of a little boy who came home from school for the holidays, and told his mother that he should like to have lived when *birds* and *beasts*, and *trees*, could *speak*; it must have been very clever to hear what they said—the mother smiled at his simplicity—“indeed,” said the child, “it is all “very true, they certainly could speak, “for *my book* says so”—and immediately opened his *Æsop’s Fables*.

Excellent is that advice of the *Apostle*—*Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit, in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men**. I am grieved exceedingly at the little attention paid to this divine precept, but much more to have seen it so thoroughly *inverted*, as it has been in the writings of some, who profess to make God’s word the rule and measure of their proceedings.

For my own part, I have made it, and

* 1 Cor. xiv. 20.

do daily make it, my business to *search the Scriptures*; and have taken no small pains to cultivate an acquaintance with the *Hebrew language*.—The result of all is, that I do as firmly believe it *impossible* for any man, or set of men, to have invented either the language itself, or the things which it records, as to have created this world out of nothing, and all things therein.

You see what I mean by *free enquiry*—viz. an emancipation of the mind from the shackles and fetters of our own corrupt reasonings; from those prejudices which an almost natural deference to human authority stamps upon the mind, even from the earliest dawnings of the understanding and judgment; and fairly laying ourselves open to such conviction, as shall result from the nature and weight of the evidence laid before us. This I call *free enquiry*; as inimical to *Infidelity* as to *Popery*, or to any other species of deception and imposition on the understandings, judgments, and consciences of mankind; and it is indeed the only true ground of real Scriptural faith, according to that of the Apostle—*Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of GOD* *. This was the process observed by the *Bereans*, for

* Rom. x. 17.

which

which they are so *nobly* commended — *These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scripture daily, whether these things were so.*

I could wish you, Sir, as well as others, to follow this precedent, which doubtless is left on record for our example and imitation; you will find it answer a much better purpose, than turning over the musty legends of what you call “Church History,” and “Church Authority.” — Be not like the *Thessalonians*, and charge a man with wanting to *turn the world upside down**, because he opposes the word of God to the traditions of men — but be like the *Bereans*, be open to conviction: lay aside your prejudices — and search the Scriptures daily, *whether these things are so.*

Next to *freedom of enquiry*, is freedom of *thought*, which is the *privilege* of every man as a rational creature. *Free-thinking*, as that term is usually understood, is the very reverse of what it implies. A man whose mind is shackled in the chains of mental darkness, tied and bound in the fetters of prejudice, and manacled in the bonds of this world’s wisdom, knows not what it is to think *freely* on any subject whatsoever, but more especially of the re-

* Acts xvii. 6, 11.

ligious kind. Proofs of this are many ; none stronger than in the famous *M. de Voltaire*. — He was bred a *Papist* — his early prejudices taught him to believe *that* the only true religion — his good understanding, and his reading, convinced him, that it was no better than a vile and monstrous imposition ; and, knowing nothing better, he sunk into the depths of infidelity — nor had he a single thought of his heart, that could rise higher than a wretched system of his own making, which he called *Philosophy* ; nor could he set a single sentiment at liberty from its attachment to *this*, that he might form an impartial judgment on any thing else. And is this *free-thinking* ? Is it not rather a poor, confined, narrow, littleness of mind, unworthy the lowest of the human species ?

He was so totally ignorant of the *Hebrew Scriptures*, as not to be able even to read the titles of the five books of *Moses* — he took it for granted that the names *Genesis*, *Exodus*, *Leviticus*, *Numbers*, *Deuteronomy*, belonged to them ; and that they were therefore coëval with the books themselves. From this circumstance, he would persuade his readers (and doubtless has persuaded many, who are such *free-thinkers* as himself) that these books could not be written until many hundred years after the time in which

which *Moses* is said to live — the *Jews* not being acquainted with *Greek*, which the above words are, 'till after their return from the captivity: besides, says he, “ these books are never quoted by “ these names, in any of the *Prophets* or “ *Psalms*, so that the books themselves “ must be *forgeries*; indeed they are not “ so much as mentioned in any books “ which the *Jews* deem canonical;” ergo, *Moses* could not write the *Pentateuch*.

How stands the case? Γενεσις is pure Greek — so is Εξοδος — Λευιτικον is made up of the word Λευι, which is *Hebrew*, but the termination τικον, is *Greek*; and so, all together, this may pass for a *Greek* word — Αριθμοι and Δευτερονομιον are *Greek*, and these titles to the books stand in the *Greek* translation; — but the original *Hebrew* books are only titled from the *first words* with which the book begins — as, what the *Greek* translation has intitled Γενεσις, is intitled in the *Hebrew original* בראשית — *In the beginning*. Εξοδος in the *Greek* has, as its title, ואלה שמות — *Now these are the names*: and so on of the rest. — How far could this *critic* be supposed *free* to *think* as he ought on *religion*, who was so fast bound in adamantine chains of ignorance, with regard even to the *language* of the *Bible*? How a man can be said to *think freely*, or to *judge freely*, of what he
is

is not *free* to read a syllable of, I leave to *Mr. de Voltaire's* philosophy, or to some of *Thelyphthora's non-reading* adversaries, to explain.

By *freedom of thought*, then, I would be understood to mean, one of the best effects of *free enquiry*; a debarment of the mind from *prepossession*, its enlargement from *prejudice*, its emancipation from *vulgar opinion*, and its *freedom of choice* in making its own conclusions, on an attentive consideration, and due deliberation, on all the circumstances which have been brought in evidence before it. This, and nothing short of this, enters into my idea of *free-thinking*; which, the farther men pursue, the brighter will the truth rise before them.

Hence follows *freedom of opinion*, which is every man's undoubted franchise; and to oppress, *persecute*, or *destroy* him for this, or even to abuse him, is an infringement, not only of all decency and good manners, but one of the highest breaches of *Christian charity*; and ought to shew men how little they know *what manner of spirit they are of* *, when they can be capable of such conduct, of such a violation of every man's rights and liberties of judgment and conscience. *Who art thou,*

* Luke ix. 55.

saith *Paul*, that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth †. Had this been observed, it would have saved some millions of *lives*; if nothing but fair discussion, and scriptural argument had been made use of for the terminating religious disputes, instead of racks, gibbets, and fires; or, where these cannot be employed, instead of their *succedanea*, libellous abuse, insult, and personal invective—had conviction been aimed at by no other instruments of persuasion, but fair deductions from the word of God, recommended by the eloquence of *Christian charity*, with no other warmth than that of an affectionate and well-informed zeal, that *reproach* would never have been brought on the Christian name, which Infidels have made their advantage of, *Devils* themselves must have rejoiced in, and which, alas! the *pamphlets* which you seem so pleased with, and send to me, are very far from tending to *lessen*.

You must not wonder that your *long word*, with the *ism* at the end of it, has brought you forth such a *long letter*; which, however, shall end no otherwise, than with assuring you that I am,

Yours, &c.

† Rom. xiv. 4.

L E T T E R

L E T T E R XIII.

To the Reverend W. G.

Oct. 5th 1781.

Reverend Sir,

I WAS much concerned at yours of the 1st instant, not for my own sake, but for yours. — The Scripture saith — *Not rendering railing for railing; but, contrariwise, blessing* * : — it likewise ranks a *railer* with such company as *Christians* are forbidden to keep † ; — for which, and many other reasons, I had rather be the *railee* than the *railer* ; more especially, where nothing but the greatest civility has on my part been shewn to the man who *rails* against me : for, if we are forbidden to return *railing* for *railing*, but, contrariwise, are commanded to return *blessing*, the unprovoked and causeless *railer* is doubly *sinful*. I could wish you to sit down, and write a *sermon* on this subject; either of the texts above alluded to would suit it : and perhaps not only your own heart, but your congregation, might be the better for it, when you preached it to them. The sooner the better ; for this same *sin* of *railing* appears to me to have gotten amongst the *religious professors*, as the blight gets some-

* 1 Pet. iii. 9.

† 1 Cor. v. 11.

times among the wheat, and spoils the growing harvest. You may treat this baleful *sin* in two lights; first, as a breach of the *sixth* commandment, being one species of murder—*He that hateth his brother*—and I am certain, that the *railer* cannot love his brother—is a murderer; and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him *. Secondly, It is a breach of the *ninth* commandment; for there never yet existed a *railer*, who did not launch out into *false testimony*, either by aggravating what is true by introducing false circumstances, or by advancing what is utterly without foundation. You may represent *railing* in a more collected view, and call it a transgression of the *whole second table of the law*; for this saith, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*. —Now, saith the *Apostle*, *Love worketh no ill to his neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law* †;—e contra, *railing*, which is the genuine offspring of *malice* and *hatred*, must be a breach of the *whole* ‡. Nay, you may still be more *collective*, and call it a breach of the *whole law*, both towards God and towards man — For, *If a man say, I love GOD, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother,*

* 1 John iii. 15.

† Rom. xiii. 9, 10.

‡ James ii. 10.

whom

whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also *.

We are told †, that when the King of Syria sent messengers to seize the Prophet *Elisha*, they were smitten with blindness—*Elisha* led them into *Samaria*, the capital of *Israel*—their eyes were then opened, and they found themselves amidst their enemies, who could have cut them to pieces.

You might introduce this little piece of sacred history into your *discourse*; you might apply it as a warning to your hearers, with respect to that blindness of heart which *railers* labour under—owing to which it is, that they may be led into very false notions of their *real state*, and that, while they are flattering themselves that they are *fellow-citizens with the Saints*, and of *the household of God* ‡, their eyes may one day be opened to see that they are *walking in the way of the ungodly—sitting in the scorn's chair* ||—and, in God's account, ranked with *fornicators, with the covetous, with idolaters, drunkards, and extortioners*. 1 Cor. v. 11.

* 1 John iv. 20, 21. † 2 Kings vi. ‡ Eph. ii. 19. || Ps. i. 1.

The discovery which the poor *Syrians* made, was a very alarming one; but still they were in the hands of *men* who might *kill the body, and after that had no more that they could do* — whereas *these* are in the hands of Him, *who is able to destroy both body and soul in hell* *.

Again—We find the Prophet *Elisba* giving us a glorious example of generosity, benevolence, and charity, even to our enemies.—The King of *Israel* said, *My father, shall I smite them? shall I smite them? And Elisba answered, Thou shalt not smite them; Wouldst thou smite those whom thou hast taken captive with thy sword, and with thy bow?—Set bread and water before them, that they may eat and drink, and go to their masters.—And he prepared great provision for them, and when they had eaten and drunk, he sent them away, and they went to their masters* †.

Thus may the LORD GOD of *Elisba* deal with you, and with your people:—may he open your eyes to see your *transgression*—take you *captives* by the constraining power of his good Spirit—take from you all the *armour wherein ye have trusted*—and, having filled you with the blessings and mercies of his forgiving love,

* Matth. x. 28. Luke xii. 4. † 1 Kings vi. 21, 22, 23.

send you away to *love others* as he *has loved you*—glorified in your *preservation*, not in your *destruction*!

I am,

Reverend Sir,

Yours, &c.

L E T T E R XIV.

To the same.

Oct. 27th, 1781.

Reverend Sir,

I Certainly meant my last, of the 5th instant, as a remonstrance, or, if you please, “a very serious remonstrance,” on your conduct towards one who never offended you in his life, but who, on all occasions, has treated you with the politeness of a gentleman, and the good offices of a friend. If you chose to reward me *evil* for *good*, you certainly have the worst of the bargain; and I am much mistaken, if ever I did you a greater kindness than when I endeavoured to represent to you your conduct in its true light: for, after all, talking about the *doctrines* of the *Gospel*, and professing ourselves *followers* of CHRIST—calling this man *worldly*, the other *carnal*—is but a poor

poor empty business; a sort of vain *trusting in ourselves that we are righteous, and despising others* *; a professing to *know God, and in works denying him* †; if allowed malice reigns in the heart, an habit of *railing and evil speaking* rules the tongue, and a spirit of *scandal and defamation*, not only influences, but directs the conversation. What avails it a pin's point, that thousands are taken with outward semblances, while these things *come from within and defile the man* ‡? We are but *like whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness* ||.

If it be true, that every *idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment* §, how much more may we suppose they will be called upon for *malicious words*? If answerable for empty, idle, unprofitable discourse, what shall be said of those *firebrands, arrows, and death* ||||, which men so wantonly are casting at the reputation, and peace, and comfort of their neighbour?

You are displeased with my mentioning, and especially with my “quoting, “the *Confessional*,” and tell me, “the

* Luke xviii. 9.
xv. 19, 20.
xii. 36.

† Tit. i. 16.
|| Matth. xxiii. 27.
|| Prov. xxvi. 18.

‡ Matth.
§ Mat:h.

“author is an *Arian*.”—What then?—Doth that prove that he is not a very “masterly writer?” Suppose you tell me that he is a *Gentoo*; doth that disprove what he says of the *knavery* and *hypocrisy* of those, who, for lucre’s sake, subscribe as *true* what they think *false*? — or who purposely put meanings to words which the authors never meant, in order to stretch them to the size of their own consciences, and to evade the real, honest, plain sense which the compilers intended; and thus defeat the evident purpose of all subscription whatsoever, while they pretend to countenance and defend it?

You say too that *Wetstein* was an *Arian*. What then! prove him also a *Turk*, if you can.—He was, notwithstanding, the most learned, laborious, and accurate *editor* of the *Greek Testament* that ever lived. But what has his being an *Arian* to do with my quotations from his notes on Matth. xix. 9. and Mark x. 11? What poor subterfuges are these, to avoid the force of an argument, which is too hard to be answered by fair reasoning!

I have not a grain the worse opinion of that great man *Erasmus*, or of any thing he ever wrote, because *Farellus* called him — *Omnium mortalium deterrimus, improbissimus, nequissimus, sceleratissimus,*

mus, scelestissimus, perditissimus, ac impurissimus nebulo?—or, because *Theodore Beza* called him — *Arian* — or, because a decree was published against him at *Paris* in 1532—or, because the *School-divines*, and *Monks*, accused him of *error*, *heresy*, and *impiety*:—what he wrote against them, and their superstitions, is just as true as if they had taken it all in good part.

You see by this how incorrigible I am, and how thoroughly so much *abuse* has been thrown away upon me. In short, Sir, I wish you to change your ground; take up your pen, try what *fair* and *scriptural* argument will do, and then the more you write, and the more you publish, the more I shall be obliged to you; for, after all, this is the only way to get at the *truth*.

Controversy, when carried on with heat and ill temper, which is commonly the case where *victory*, not *truth*, is contended for, is of all things the most irksome, and usually terminates in misleading the reader far from the point in question. It is like an *horse-match*, where crossing and jostling is allowed. The *jockey* who is most dextrous in the management of his knees and elbows, and at driving his adversary out of the course, or against a post, will stand the best chance of winning; while the real swiftness or goodness of the

horses is left as much undetermined as if they had never started.

I have heard an anecdote of a certain great lawyer, who was twice *Lord Chancellor of England*, that, when he was a young man at the bar, he used frequently to come from the *Temple* to *Westminster-hall* by water. One day, as he, and some other young Barristers, were on their *voyage* in a boat together, they were rowed up to by a *waterman*, who was a great adept in what was then much in vogue, and termed *water-language*—The fellow, who thought a cargo of *lawyers* no bad object for his talent to exercise itself upon, let fly a broadside or two of the lowest and most impudent abuse that heart could conceive, or tongue could utter — Mr. C. sat unmoved, softly desiring his friends to be quite *silent*, giving a charge also of a like nature to the *watermen* who were rowing them.—The fellow, who was in a *sculler*, pulling against the tide, and sweating and swearing amain, grew furious at finding his *shot* take so little place, and that he could not make the gentlemen angry—“What the D——l,” says the fellow, making a violent effort to get close alongside the boat, “can’t ye *bear*, or can’t ye *speak*, and be d—n’d to ye?”—“Row on fellow,” says Mr. C. very calmly, “you have the best of it.” — The hero dropped

dropped astern, muttering and growling —
The gentlemen soon got out of hearing any
thing more, but highly entertained at the
adventure.

“ I will conclude with the fable of *Boc-*
“ *calini*’s Traveller *, who was so pestered
“ with the noise of grasshoppers in his
“ ears, that he alighted from his horse
“ in great wrath to kill them all. This,
“ says the author, was troubling himself
“ to no manner of purpose: had he pur-
“ sued his journey without taking notice
“ of them, the troublesome insects would
“ have died of themselves in a very few
“ weeks, and he would have suffered no-
“ thing from them.”

I leave the application of these histories
to yourself, and think you need not be at
much pains to extract an argument for my
silence, with respect to the publications
which you press me to answer.

I am,

Reverend Sir,

Yours, &c.

* See Spectator, N° 355.

LETTER XV.

To Mrs. A——.

Nov. 9th, 1781.

Madam,

YOURS, with the *pamphlet*, arrived safe. Your “wish that I would publish an *answer*” to the latter, is, I dare say, well meant; but you must excuse me, if I assure you, that I can never entertain the most remote idea of such a thing. When any man, more especially a *Divine*, can dare to tell the world, that some of the *Jewish* laws “seem inconsistent with the whole system of the Christian *law of love*—are sanguinary laws—seem opposite to the spirit of Christian forgiveness—are contrary to the original law of murder, as well as to every idea of Christian *justice*”—such a man must be supposed to assert in a few words, what it cost *Lord Bolingbroke*, and *Monfieur de Voltaire*, a great number of arguments, and all in vain, to maintain. As for the epithet *Christian*—“*Christian law of love—Christian justice*,” &c. I know not the meaning of such a distinction.—The law of *love*, of *justice*, and the like, must be *one*, both in *Jew* and *Gentile*. *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*, includes every thing which can be said on the subject,

subject, either in the Old Testament or in the New. — However, I have nothing to say to such a *Rabshakeh*—“*For the king's commandment was, saying, Answer him not **.” As for the rest of his book, his *malice* seems to lurk behind his words, as an *assassin* lurks behind some corner of a street, for the better opportunity of executing his base and horrid commission. — So much for that. — I pity this *bitter* writer — I wish him happy. — I am certain that no man can be *happy* in himself, who can wish to make another otherwise.

I am, Madam,

Yours, &c.

P. S. The pains which he has taken, and the pages he has employed, to *contrast* a *law* in the New Testament, to the *Law* in the Old Testament, reminds me of a work of the Heretic *Marcion*, in the second century, which he entitled—“*Antitheses*, or “the *contrarieties* between the *Law* and the “*Gospel* ;” one tenet of which was, “that, “the *good* God was the Redeemer of the “world, and the *author* of the *Gospel* ; that “the *evil* God was the Creator of the “world, and the *author* of the *Law*.” The *Cerdonians*, who flourished about the same time, rejected the books of the Old Tes-

2 Kings, xviii. 36.

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tament

tament entirely; and so should I, if I could believe, this *Pamphleteer*.—The *Alcoran* says, that “God hath given men
“ *different laws*, that he might try them
“ in that which he hath given them re-
“ spectively.”

L E T T E R XVI.

To the Reverend Mr. E——.

November 20th, 1781.

Reverend Sir,

YOUR letter is very full of *fault-finding*; but I must be so free as to say, that I do not quite understand what you mean, nor am I thoroughly clear that you understand yourself. Do you intend to assert, that “the study of the *Hebrew language* is unprofitable, and waste of time, “ which might be better employed?”—If, with the *Infidel*, we are to reject the *Bible*, as not a revelation from God, I certainly agree with you, that it is a sad “waste of “ time” to study the language in which it is written, as there is no other book written in the same, and therefore we cannot avail ourselves of it, as we do of other languages, to pry into the works of various
authors,

authors, either for instruction or amusement. But, if it be true which Stephen said of Moses †—*This is he that was with the church in the wilderness, with the angel which spake to him in the MOUNT SINAI, and with our fathers: who received the LIVELY ORACLES to give unto us*—I should apprehend, that these *lively, or living oracles*—ΛΟΓΙΑ ΖΩΝΤΑ—are richly worth our deepest consideration; and that the language in which they are written, must be more worth our time and pains to acquire an acquaintance with, than any other language upon earth; for I scruple not to call it the *language of Heaven*, and therefore the *Hebrew Bible* is, indeed and in truth, the WORD OF GOD. Notwithstanding this, I do agree with you, that “few people
“ think it worth their while to study the
“ original, but content themselves with
“ our excellent translation.” I should be very sorry to say any thing in disparagement of our *excellent translation*; but still it is the work of *fallible* men, who are liable to error and mistake; and indeed, neither the *Greek, Latin, English*, nor any other tongue, has words to come up to, or give us the full meaning of the *Hebrew*—
“ For the same things uttered in *Hebrew*,
“ and translated into *another tongue*, have

† Acts vii. 38.

“ not the *same force* in them; and not
 “ only these things, but the *law itself*, and
 “ the *prophecies*, and the rest of the books,
 “ have no *small difference* when they are
 “ spoken in their own language.” So says
 Jesus the son of Sirach, who wrote soon af-
 ter the LXX translation was finished.—I
 should imagine, that, these words, which
 are to be found in the *prologue* to the book
 of *Ecclesiasticus*, are very sufficient to stir us
 up to search for ourselves; seeing, that no
 translation, however good, (and I believe the
best we have might be made *still better*)
 can bring us into so full an acquaintance
 with the real mind of God, as the original
 language in which it was originally reveal-
 ed, and which cannot be fully and ade-
 quately explained in any other language
 whatsoever. I have heard of people, who
 have been so pleased with the *Don Quixote*
 of Cervantes, even in the *English* translation,
 that they have applied themselves to learn
 the *Spanish* tongue, that they might have
 the greater pleasure of reading it in the
 original; and they have thought their pains
 well repaid. I never heard this censured,
 but highly commended, as a very laudable
 piece of curiosity—strange then! to hear a
 man, a scholar, a minister of God, charge
 another with “waste of time” in searching
 after the true intent and meaning of those
living words, those *lively oracles*, those im-
mediate

mediate transcripts of the divine mind and will—those *autographs*, as it were, of heavenly inspiration—the *Hebrew Scriptures*!

Let us suppose, that the *Head Masters* of *Westminster* and *Eton* schools should take into their heads, that, to teach their boys *Latin* and *Greek*, is “a sad waste of time” which might be better employed—that, *Virgil*, *Horace*, *Terence*, *Tacitus*, &c. are so well translated into *English*, by *Dryden*, *Creech*, *Eckard*, *Gordon*, &c.—and that *Homer*, and other *Greek* authors, had been so well translated by *Pope* and others, that it is fully sufficient to teach their pupils the *English* tongue, without troubling their heads with learning *dead* languages—would not such a proceeding stamp the idea of *madness* on the *masters*, and bring instant ruin on the *schools*? Yet, what is there in all the *Latin* and *Greek* authors above-mentioned, and indeed in all the works of human wisdom and genius, that *Greece* and *Rome* ever produced, equal in importance with one single *chapter* or *verse* in the *Hebrew Bible*? How is it then, Sir, that you can undervalue the sacred *original* of this, who have taken so much pains to acquaint yourself with the *nugæ splendide* of the heathen classics? for *nugæ* they certainly are, in comparison of the knowledge of the only true **GOD**, and of *Jesus Christ*,
whom

whom He hath sent *.—The foundation of all this, is in the *Hebrew Bible*, and the better we understand this, with the more certainty, assurance, and confidence shall we know, that the *testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy* †, is the very marrow, sum, and substance, of *the Law and the Prophets*—and the more fully we are persuaded of this ourselves, with the greater boldness may we preach it to others. Whereas, the discouraging or hindering the study of *Hebrew*, is rather ranking ourselves with those of old, to whom our Blessed LORD said—*Woe unto you Lawyers!* (*νομικοι*, teachers of the Law) *for ye have taken away the key of knowledge; ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered* ‡. These men misled the people, either by teaching *tradition* instead of Scripture, or by not suffering the people to take the Scriptures in any other sense than they pleased to impose upon them. This doth the *Church of Rome* at this day; and this doth every man, in effect, who would bind down others to *human* interpretations, and not suffer them to *search the Scriptures* for themselves. Our excellent translators had no such meaning; they rendered the *Hebrew* according to the best of their ability,

* John xvii. 3.
xi. 52.

† Rev. xix. 10.

‡ Luke

in terms as near the original as a different language would permit, not intending by this to *hinder* farther enquiry, but to *promote* it—not to take away the *key of knowledge*, but to facilitate the true use and application of it. They were honest men, they had but one cause to serve, that of God and truth; they served it faithfully, so faithfully, as to leave us without excuse, if we do not avail ourselves of their labours, still to search farther into the *original*. I hold it no disparagement to a *giant*, to say that a *dwarf* set on his shoulders can see farther than the *giant* himself.

As for “the differences among *translators* and *interpreters*,” I think this one of the strongest arguments, that can possibly be urged, in favour of the study of the *Hebrew Bible* for ourselves. However other people may differ, the *inspired penmen* of the *original* all speak the *same thing*; and however other languages may vary in *expression* from each other, yet the *Hebrew* is but *one*, and the *same* with itself. Its *words* can never acquire new *uses*, or new *meanings*; they are all *ideal*, or expressive of images taken from *ideas* of *natural things*; therefore, ’till *nature itself* can change, there can be no change in one single *Hebrew* word. This circumstance alone, sets it’s excellency above that of all other languages.

Let

Let us only go back about 450 years, to the days of *Chaucer*—which of us should understand the *English* which was then spoken? let us imagine *Chaucer* himself now to listen to the more than *Ciceronian* eloquence of *Lord Mansfield*—what a jargon of *gibberish* would it appear to him? But could we be set at *Mount Sinai*, could we hear the “voice of words*” then spoken, we should find them just the same as we now find them in our *Hebrew* Bibles; such as they were then, such are they now, and such must they ever remain. For which plain and evident reason, they must so influence our construction of the *New Testament*, as to make us fix its meaning to the sense of the *Hebrew* Scriptures; for no variation or contradiction to this, can possibly be its true interpretation;—so that I will conclude with asserting, that, a knowledge of the *Hebrew* is as necessary for a true interpretation of the *New Testament*, as for a right understanding of the *Old Testament*.

As for the *Points*, they are no part of the original *Biblical Hebrew*, nor have they any thing to do with the language, unless it be to corrupt it—so that you need not waste any time about these. If you will put yourself to the expence of the second edition of *Parkhurst's Hebrew and English*

* Heb. xii. 19.

Lexicon, you will no longer have to charge “the helps for the study of *Hebrew*, with “such *dryness* and discouragement.”—Never was any book of this kind so calculated for *entertainment*, as well as for *instruction* and *erudition*; it is replet with every kind of useful learning, and all brought, in the most engaging manner, to the *service of the sanctuary*. This—the interlineary version of *Arias Montanus*—and your *English Bible*—applied to for *one hour* in the day, might soon convince you, that, instead of “wasting your time, which might be better “employed to other purposes,” you have employed it to the best and noblest of all purposes, that of qualifying yourself, more than ever, for *mightily* convincing all *gain-sayers*, and that *publicly*, *shewing by the Scriptures*, that *Jesus is Christ* *.

M. Luther, in his comment on Ps. xlv. faith—*Scio quantum mihi cognitio Ebrææ linguæ profuerit contra hostes meos; quare hac quantulacunque cognitione infinitis aureorum carere nolim.* To which last sentence I set my hearty—Amen.

I wish you would look over a small book, printed for *Johnson* near the *Monument*: It was published by *Joshua Kettleby*, 1762, and intitled “The Excellency and Great Importance of the *Hebrew* language demonstrated.”

* Acts xviii. 28.

You

— You will therein find the above testimony of *Luther*, and that of upwards of fifty other celebrated authors.

I have written so much in behalf of *GOD's book*, that I have no time left to say any thing of *mine*, nor indeed have I any inclination to enter into any disputes about it: if it will not answer for itself, I shall not think it at all worth my while to answer for it.

I am,

Reverend Sir,

Yours, &c.

L E T T E R XVII.

To the Reverend Mr. Y——.

November 22, 1781.

Rev. and dear Sir,

THE task which you would impose on me, “to write a complete comment “on the seventh chapter of the First Epistle “to the *Corinthians*,” is, I will freely confess, beyond the extent of my poor abilities. However you, and others, may think this portion of Scripture very plain, and easy of interpretation; yet, judging for myself, of what *may* be done from what *has been* done, I own, that I cannot help looking on this chapter, many parts of it at least, among those writings of *Saint Paul*,
in

in which are *δυσοντα τινα* — *certain things hard to be understood* *.

Dr. Guyse, in his note on the first verse, says, “ Had we before us the letter which
“ the *Corinthians* wrote to *St. Paul*, we
“ might form a better judgment of the
“ beauty and propriety of his thoughts on
“ the points proposed, than we now can,
“ for want of knowing its contents, any
“ farther than may be gathered from his
“ reply, and from the very scanty remains
“ of the history of those times.”

This observation is worthy the modesty and learning of your old friend *Dr. Guyse*: these, as *impudence* and *ignorance* in many others, met together in this excellent and judicious paraphrast and annotator. Now, Sir, if you can produce me an authentic copy of the *Corinthians* letter to the *Apostle*, I will promise you to undertake the “ *complete comment*” which you desire; ’till then, I must be content with *guessing* for myself, from what I can understand of the answer, what was proposed in the letter; leaving others to *guess* for themselves; thankful, at the same time, for such helps as the learned have from time to time afforded.

In general, I should think most of the chapter unintelligible, because contrary to

* 2 Pet. iii. 15, 16.

what the Old Testament says on the subject of marriage, if I did not take what is said at verse 26 as a *key* to many passages. For instance, verse 1, *It is good for a man not to touch a woman*. How is this reconcileable with Genesis i. 28, *And GOD blessed them, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth?* Compare Genesis ix. 1, 7. where the same command is twice repeated. Again, Genesis ii. 18, *And the Lord GOD said, It is NOT GOOD that man should be alone; I will make him an help * meet for him* — And verse 22, *He made, and brought the woman to the man*.

In short, *marriage itself* is set in such a point of view, as if it was *only* to be undertaken as a *lesser evil* to avoid a *greater*. As for a *second marriage*, it seems positively forbidden — *Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife*. The cohabitation as man and wife is *commanded* in one place, verse 3—4, and seems *forbidden* in another, v. 29 — *Those that have wives are to be as those that have none*. Hence some heretics called *Abelians*, or *Abelonites*, from their professing to imitate *Abel* † the son of *Adam*, among other strange tenets, held it right to marry, but then to live with their wives in total absti-

* Eng. Transf.

† See Turner Hist. Hæret. p. 160.

nence. *St. Austin* held such marriages more blessed than any other *.

There can be little doubt, but that, from the literal interpretation of this chapter, the ancient fathers, and primitive Christians, had their strange conceits about *celibacy*, and laid the foundation of all those unnatural and monstrous schemes of it, which remain to this day among the *clergy* and votaries of the *Church of Rome*.

But when we make use of the aforesaid *key*, and consider, that all the *Apostle* says on the subject of marriage, is not to be understood *simply* and *universally*, but merely as *good for the present distress* (verse 26.) which, from the state of persecution the church was under at that time, threatened not only their liberty, but even life itself; then we see the wisdom of the *whole*, however we may differ in our interpretation of particular *parts*; and that the *Apostle* must be understood to mean no more than, that, in the present *distressed* state of things—when men were standing *every hour in jeopardy* † of the loss of their *goods*, and even of their *lives*, for their profession of *Christianity*—it was *good, wisest, best*, to have as few attachments to this world, and to every thing in it, as possible; therefore, that which of all

* See *Thelyphthora*, vol. iii. p. 45.

† 1 Cor. xv. 30.

others is the tenderest and dearest, and of course the *strongest*, should in prudence be avoided, if this could be done without danger of being tempted, or perhaps of being overcome by a temptation, to something worse.

This I take to be the general scope of what the *Apostle* says, either with regard to *first* or *second* marriages; not that either were *evil* in themselves, to any persons whatsoever, or rendered men less holy and acceptable to God, as considered in themselves; as if a state of *virginity* or *celibacy* were in themselves preferable to *marriage*, which is the undoubted ordinance of God for the propagation and preservation of the human species;—but that, all circumstances considered, δια τὴν ἐνεστῶσαν ἀναγκὴν—on account of the present distress or necessity, if it could with safety be avoided, it would be most prudent and best so to do.

But there is a difficulty which meets us at the very threshold of our comment, which I do not conceive it very possible to clear up with certainty, unless we were possessed, if not of the *autograph*, yet of an authentic copy of the *Corinthians* letter. The difficulty I mean is, whether the words—Καλὸν ἀνθρώπῳ γυναῖκος μὴ ἀπτεσθαι—good for a man not to touch a woman—are the words of the *Corinthians* letter, or the beginning of the *Apostle's* answer.

Some

Some learned men have thought them the words of the *Corinthians*. In that ingenious and learned performance, *Bowyer's Conjectures on the New Testament*, you will find the following note on these words : — “ *Καλον ανθρωπω γυναικος μη απτεσθαι*] the “ words of the *Corinthians*; then follows the “ *Apostle's* answer, *Δια δε τας πορνειας, &c.* “ *but to avoid fornication, let every man retain* “ *his own wife.* R.” This mark of the R. I am told, distinguishes the note to belong to that great critic and scholar, the late Mr. *Markland*, Fellow of *Peter-house*, *Cambridge*.

Dr. Whitby's paraphrase shews, that he thought the *Καλον ανθρωπω, &c.* were the words of the *Corinthians*.

“ Now [*to speak*] concerning the things
“ whereof ye wrote unto me ; [*viz.*] It is
“ good for a man not to touch a woman
“ [i. e. *to live unmarried, or without the use*
“ *of a woman, or it is not good to marry,*
“ *Matt. xix. 10. This I grant, as CHRIST*
“ *did to him, who, having the gift of conti-*
“ *nency, can receive the saying.*”]

“ * Nevertheless, to avoid [*that*] fornication
“ [*which is so common at Corinth, and so freely*
“ *practised by the Nicolaitans, under the pre-*
“ *tence that matrimony is a thing indifferent*]
“ let every man have [*εχετω, retain*] his own
“ wife, and let every woman have her own
“ husband.”

* Ver. 2.

Here, by the way, I would hope, you will be a little better reconciled to my interpretation of this second verse in *Thelyphthora*; for the *Nicolaitans* allowed a *community of wives*; that is what Dr. *Whitby* supposes this second verse to be levelled against; and therefore “every man should *retain* his own “wife,” and consequently not put her away, nor let her go to others. You will observe that he construes the first *εχειτω* by *retain*, and leaves the second *εχειτω* *have*, according to our translation. So learned a precedent as this will, I hope, moderate your anger against the author of *Thelyphthora*, for having given different senses to the word *εχειτω*, in the same verse.

Dr. *Whitby*'s note on the place, to which I refer you, rather makes me think that *he* and *Markland* are right with regard to the *Καλον ανθρωπω*, &c.; but I will not take upon me to determine any thing on the matter.

Be this as it may, I do not see the subject of *Polygamy* mentioned any where throughout the chapter; as to squeezing it *in* by a forced construction, and then squeezing it *out* by a forced interpretation, it is treating the *Apostle* as the *Rhemists* have treated him; for they make him “prefer virginity before marriage, as having a grateful purity of body and soul, “which marriage hath not,” and this with

with regard to all men ; and then tell us, that “ as for the *clergy*, and those who “ have made a vow of chastity, if they “ marry, their marriage is but pretended, “ and is the worst sort of incontinency and “ fornication, or burning.” I suppose, if any man in a *Popish* country was to lift up his pen against this, his book would be burnt by the *common hangman* ; and he would be rather fortunate, if Monsieur *Le Bourreau* did not such a writer the same *kind* office.

I have been insensibly drawn on to write a much longer letter than I intended ; but, as I am determined that it shall be the last which you will receive from me, in the controversial style, I will conclude it with a short, but a very peremptory argument, against all you say on this controverted point ; which is, that *Paul* the APOSTLE is no where called *Paul* the LAWGIVER ; and till you can produce me more than the One *Lawgiver, who is able to save and destroy* *, the sum total of my creed on the point will be the prophet *Isaiab's* † declaration—JEHOVAH is our *Judge*—JEHOVAH is our LAWGIVER—JEHOVAH is our KING—*He will save us*—adds the evangelical *Prophet*.—May He *save us*—“ from all false doctrine,

* James iv. 12. † Is. xxxiii. 22.

“ heresy, and schism, from all blindness
 “ and hardness of heart, and from all
 “ contempt of his word and command-
 “ ments!”

I am,

Yours, &c.

L E T T E R XVIII.

To the Reverend B. G.

January 14th, 1782.

YOUR first letter reached me in due time: I own myself to blame that I did not acknowledge it; but the scene of affliction in which I have been involved, on the loss of my excellent mother, and the avocations such a change must occasion, must plead my excuse.

You say, that you “ think me mistaken
 “ with regard to the laws of *Exodus* and
 “ *Deuteronomy*; they are not to be under-
 “ stood as *moral* laws, but merely as *judi-*
 “ *cial* laws, which were for a peculiar
 “ people, and this only for a limited time,
 “ while the *Jewish* polity lasted”—that,
 “ they were addressed to the *Jews* parti-
 “ cularly, and to no others; therefore
 “ *Christians* are not bound by them, and
 “ have nothing to do with them.”——

You

You think that I shall find it a difficult matter to answer all this, and yet if I do not, you “cannot see how I can defend “ the part of my book, where I insist so “ much on the perpetual obligation of these “ laws.”

You must excuse my freedom; but, if I am to judge of your ideas of these things, from the expressions in your letters, I believe, that I could set *you* a task, still more difficult than that which *you* have set *me*, by desiring you to explain the difference between a *moral* and a *judicial* law; for you appear to me to have set the one in direct opposition to the other; whereas, in truth and in fact, they are, in many instances, just the same in *substance*, and differ in *form* only. Are you sure you do not mean *ceremonial* laws all this while? pardon such a question; but, unless this be the case, I cannot conceive or imagine how you can speak of *judicial* laws as merely *local* and *transitory*, as *such*.

Judicial laws, which I take in general to be signified by—משפטים—which we translate *judgments*, and, when joined with *Laws* and *Statutes*, must be analogous thereto, I do understand to signify, those divine *statutes*, which not only forbid a thing to be done, but pronounce the *sentence*, *judgment*, or *penalty*, on the transgressor. If these sort of laws relate to *moral* actions, they

they are of a *moral* nature—if to *ceremonial* observances, they are of the *ceremonial* kind: in the *first* instance, they must be *permanent*; in the *second*, they are *waxed old* and *vanished away*.—I will give you examples of each.

The *sixth* Commandment says—*Thou shalt do no murder*. Here it appears in a *preceptive* form. Let us look elsewhere, and we shall find this *moral* institute in a *judicial* form—*Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed**.

Again—The *seventh* Commandment saith—*Thou shalt not commit adultery*. Elsewhere we find it written—*The man that committeth adultery with another man's wife—he that committeth adultery with his neighbour's wife, the adulterer and the adulterers shall surely be put to death*†.

Now, Sir, by what *scriptural* rule of construction do you abolish these *moral* laws, because they appear in a *judicial* form?

Try the laws of *Exodus* and *Deuteronomy*, which prohibit the *seduction* and *dereliction* of *virgins*, by such rule of construction, and see how it can possibly apply to their abolition, unless indeed *morality* is not concerned in the matter.

The *ceremonial* laws sometimes appear in a *judicial* form; as for instance, where

* Gen. ix. 6.

† Levit. xx. 10.

the holy anointing oil is forbidden to be counterfeited *, or any other to be made like it—it is said—*Whosoever compoundeth any like it, or whosoever putteth any of it upon a stranger, shall even be cut off from his people.*

Again—concerning the *holy perfume* †—*Whosoever shall make like unto that, to smell thereto, shall even be cut off from his people.*

These are *judicial* laws, but are of the *ceremonial* kind; therefore, with the *ceremonial* dispensation, are *waxed old, and vanished away* ‡, though what they signified, and pointed out, shall remain for ever !

I hope, after this, that I shall hear no more of a distinction of *moral* from *judicial* laws, as if a *moral* law, in a *judicial* form, was not just as much a *moral* institute, as if in a *preceptive* form only.—In short, Sir, *such* laws, whatever you may please to make of them, are no less than God's *judgments* on the *moral* actions of men; and, though *heaven and earth pass away*, yet *shall not these pass away* ||.

But, the laws of *Exodus* and *Deuteronomy*,
 “ were addressed to the Jews particularly
 “ and to no others; therefore Christians
 “ are not bound by them, and have nothing
 “ to do with them.”

If this be true, then are the Christians

* Exod. xxx. 33. † Ver. 38. ‡ Heb. viii. 13.
 || Matt. v. 18.

a most *lawless* set of people; because, on this footing, they are not bound by *any law* whatsoever throughout the whole *Bible*; For to whom were the laws, which are found there, “addressed particularly?” Let us try what your argument will do with the *ten Commandments*. These were addressed to the “*Jews* particularly, and to no others;” for most indubitably there were *no others* described in the *preface* with which they were introduced at *Mount Sinai*.

GOD spake all these words, saying—I am the Lord thy GOD, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage *.—Again—Hear, O Israel! the Lord our GOD is one Lord †.—And again—Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your ears this day, that ye may learn them, and keep and do them ‡—then follows a repetition of the *Ten Commandments*. Now, Sir, apply your argument to all this, and see whither it will carry you.

Moses took very sufficient care that this matter should not be misunderstood, as if the *Jews* were to be *under the Law*, and others be left *lawless*; for, in many places, he expresses himself to the following effect—Ye shall have one manner of law, as well for the stranger, as for one of your own country; for I am the Lord your GOD §. Now,

* Exod. xx. 1, 2. † Deut. vi. 4. ‡ Deut. v. 1.
§ Levit. xxiv. 22.

saith the *Apostle*, *Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also* *.

Neither with YOU ONLY, (saith Moses) do I make this covenant and this oath, but with him that standeth here with us this day before the Lord our GOD, and also with him that is not here with us this day †.

For all which reasons, and for many more which might be given, I do conclude, with the *Apostle*—that, *we are not without law to GOD, but under the law to Christ ‡*—and more especially as GOD has been pleased to make it a part of the *Christian covenant*, that *He will put HIS LAW in our inward parts, and WRITE IT in our hearts*—*He will be our GOD, and we shall be his people* ||—of course, subject to *his laws*; unless HE be the only *Sovereign* whose people govern themselves, either by *no laws* at all, or by some laws of their own devising, independently of *Him*.

As for your introduction of the story of *Judah* and *Thamar*, I cannot see what purpose is answered by it. In the first place, it happened about 236 years before the *Law* was given, which so clearly and fully settled the bounds of *consanguinity* or *affinity*, within which marriage was determined to be unlawful. In the next place,

* Rom. iii. 29.

† Deut. xxix. 14, 15.

‡ 1 Cor. ix. 21. || Jer. xxxi. 33. comp. Heb. x. 16.

there seems to be something very *mysterious* throughout this transaction, which, if you and I do not perfectly understand, we cannot explain. It is the opinion of many learned men, that it falls under the Apostle's ἀτινα εἰν ἀλληγορούμενα—*these things are to be allegorized**—and accordingly many commentators have aimed to set it forth in an *allegorical* light. “In the birth of these
 “ two brethren (*Pharez* and *Zara*) the state
 “ of the two churches of the Jews and
 “ Gentiles may be considered as in a figure ;
 “ the *Jews*, as the elder, drawing back the
 “ hand through unbelief (Rom. x. 3, 21.)
 “ the Gentiles as by violence getting the
 “ heavenly birthright. And when the Gen-
 “ tiles are fully born, then shall the Jews
 “ (that had the sign of the first birth-
 “ right on their hands) come forth again.”
 So say *Mr. Clark*, and others.

But with respect to the *letter* of this chapter ; it certainly proves, that *Pharez*, whom we find registered in the holy line to *David*†, was descended from *Abraham* through *Judah* the son of *Jacob*. *St. Matthew* mentions both *Pharez* and *Zara*, likewise their mother *Thamar*, who, though strictly speaking an *adulteress*, as she was betrothed to *Shelah*, yet perhaps not so blameable as you would make her out. I

* Gal. iv. 24.

† Matt. i. 3.

am apt to think, that it was not from a principle of lust, or desire of gain, that she acted as she did; for though she seems to have been an *heathen* by birth, of the land of *Canaan*, yet, like *Rahab* and *Ruth* in aftertimes, to have embraced the religion of *Jacob*, and to have a notion of the *Messiah's** being promised to *his seed*. Her vehement desire to have a child by one of his family, can hardly be accounted for on any other principle; and, though she took means, which appear to us sinful, to obtain her purpose, yet, *He, whose are the children, and the fruit of the womb* †, was pleased to ordain that it should be so. This consideration ought to silence us on the subject; or, if we say any thing on this—on *Rebekah's* contrivance to deceive *Isaac* ‡—on *Jacob's* obtaining the blessing by a *fraud*—and certain other passages of holy writ, let us say with the *Apostle*—*O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of GOD! how unsearchable are his judgments! and his ways past finding out* §!

I still say, and do not find it has been, or indeed can be, disproved, that, if the *laws of Israel* had been like *our laws*, with regard to the making void all polygamous contracts, and bastardizing the issue, then

* See Patrick on Gen. xxxviii. 18. † Ps. cxxvii. 3.
‡ Gen. xxvii. 9—17. § Rom. xi. 33.

Christ could not be deemed the *legal issue* of *David*, or the SON of DAVID, in the *true*, *legal*, and *inheritable* sense of the word, and consequently could not be *heir* to the *crown*; and if so, not the person described by *Isaiab* and the other *Prophets*, and especially by *Zechariab*—*Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion—shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold THY KING cometh unto thee *!*

Whatever might have happened before the days of *David*, in respect to the business of *Thamar*, or any others, it had no concern with this question. *David* took not the kingdom by *descent*, in consequence of a strict settlement, or limitation upon any of his ancestors. He was a *purchaser*, as our law would call him; he took the crown from the hands of GOD, as an inheritance to him, and to the *heirs* of his *body*; under which limitation none could take, or be legally and truly *King of Israel*, who was not *legally* and *truly* descended from Him; but *Christ* was *the Son of David according to the flesh*, by true and legal descent, both by his mother *Mary*, and by his supposed father *Joseph*; therefore the *polygamous* contracts of his ancestors from *David* downwards, through *Nathan*, *Solomon*, &c. must have been *true* and *legal*; and therefore

* Zech. ix. 9.

LETTER XVIII.

97

Nathaniel was perfectly right in hailing Him — *King of Israel* * — the multitudes paid him the rightful tribute of their *Hosannas*—saying—*Blessed is the KING OF ISRAEL, that cometh in the name of the Lord!*—and *Pilate* wrote more truth than he was aware of, when he wrote on the cross, in *Hebrew, Greek, and Latin*—JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS.

How you may be with *reading* I know not, but I am so tired with *writing*, that I can only add

Yours, &c.

LETTER XIX.

To Mrs. K——.

January 26th, 1782.

Dear Madam,

I Received yours, with the *Dialogues*, and the *Poem*; as to the former, I think the *two old friends* exhibit a curious conversation in *low life*; however, they seem so fit for each other's company, and so perfectly satisfied and agreed between themselves, that I should be very sorry to attempt setting them at variance, or putting them out of conceit with themselves; so, with my

* John i. 49:

H

compliments

compliments to Messrs. *Philaethes* and *Monogamus*, though it be too late to wish them a merry *Christmas*, yet I wish them a happy *New-year*; and hope that, within the course of it, they will “give *Thelyphthora* another reading,” if peradventure they may understand it.

Pope says—

“A Saint in *crape*, is twice a Saint in *lawn*.”

Perhaps the writer of your *Poem*, thinks, that an abusive libel in *verse* is twice as good as in *prose*. “*Keen iambics*,” as *Mr. Bayes* says, nothing like them, to be sure.

How shall I repay the pains which you have been at to send me so much entertainment? all franked, even carriage paid, which these hard times make of the more consequence. What pity is it, that all this should be thrown away on a creature that has neither *verse* nor *prose* to employ in the service of retaliation!

You have, however, contributed to the filling my drawer, which now is almost replete with squibs, letters, pamphlets, &c. on the subject of *Thelyphthora*; all of which serve to inform me how thoroughly I am mistaken, and misapprehended, as to the whole object and meaning of my book, by the several critics who have done me the honour to abuse me.

It is not in my power to remove the
2 veil

veil from *ignorance*, or to cause the scales to fall from the eyes of *prejudice*. I cannot take away the poison from *malice*, or its deadly venom from *malevolence*. It is not for me to make men intelligent, candid, and charitable; kind and benevolent. If I could do these, my book would not only have been rightly understood, but its whole intention would have received the most candid interpretation. I should not have been told, that, “ I wanted to introduce
“ an indiscriminate practice of *Polygamy*,
“ and to procure a *law* for the intro-
“ duction of *Turkish Seraglios*”—that “ I am
“ for setting aside all marriage-ceremony,
“ and for men and women’s living toge-
“ ther under no other obligation than there
“ is between the beasts of the field.” My having entered my *protest*, my having expressed my utmost *abhorrence* of these ideas, and that in direct terms, in more *passages*, and indeed *pages*, than one, has not availed me. These *Shibboleths* are still current, they constitute the very essence of what has been written against me; and numbers are so fond of talking of what I do *not* mean, that they will not listen to what I *do* mean.

With this I must rest content, till men’s passions and prejudices find a time to subside; and then, perhaps, I may not be so ill understood as to be supposed capable

of so much *folly*, to say no worse, and that on the most mature deliberation, as to write a treatise to prevent the ruin of women, and yet to set aside the *only ties* which, as the world is at present constituted, can possibly prevent it.

To contend, on the authority of the *divine law*, for making the seduction and defilement of married women an object of our criminal laws—can hardly, with reason, be supposed to promote the cause of *Adultery*.

Nor can the cause of *Prostitution* be fairly understood to meet with encouragement, by contending, on the authority of God's own positive institutions, that what *He has joined together, no man can put asunder*. It follows, then, that the *union* is inseparable; and therefore *human laws* should enforce it in every case where the *Divine law* has determined it so to be.

This is the sum and substance of what *Thelyphthora* contends for on these very interesting subjects; and if, in the prosecution of them, any thing is said, which necessarily involves a contradiction to our *laws, customs, prejudices, or opinions*, it must be attributed to that contradiction which is found in *these*, to what God has revealed, as His mind and will, in his own most sacred, and inviolable, and perfect laws; which I have made the *basis* of every *proposition*,

position, as well as of every *argument* which supports it.

The arrows of my adversaries have been aimed at *me*, some of them, I am sorry to say, tipped with deadly poison; but, while armed with the breast-plate of *divine truth*, I am invulnerable, and their weapons strike, where, I most charitably and earnestly hope, the assailants do not mean they should.

You tell me, that “ I have lost some “ friends by this publication.”—Fear not, Madam, I shall find them again, if they are worth *having*, either in *this* world, or in a *better*.

With my best compliments to Mr.
K—,

I remain,

Madam,

Yours, &c.

P. S. You ask me, why I did not publish the letters which I shewed you, at the end of my second edition?—I answer, that, as I am no *quack*, I don't deal in publishing *puffs*.

L E T T E R XX.

To W. D. Esquire.

Feb. 9th, 1782.

Dear Sir,

I Received yours, which contained an account of what passed when you was at B.—I am sorry to think that there should be any such *meetings* as you describe. When *singing hymns* and *praying* (if such wretched *mockery* can be called *praying*) stand as the *overture* and *introduction* to scandalous conversation, evil speaking, and defamation of the absent; there is but one aggravation, which seems to me admissible, that is the pretended purpose of the meeting—viz.—*religious conversation*—by your account, this was the preface to what you relate. You tell me, that “ not one of them had read the book, or had any personal acquaintance with the author.”

What can one say of such people? what can one think of such meetings, where mere *hear-say* evidence of *books* and *authors* passes for truth and demonstration, and sentence is passed on the characters of *both*, on the mere report of somebody, who had it from somebody else, who was told it by he forgets whom, by another who heard it, he forgets where, and so on? How is all

all this consistent with *religion*, which, as it more especially respects our *duty* towards our *neighbour*, is but another name for *charity* and good offices? Is this *doing unto others as you would they should do unto you*? Was there, can you suppose, one in that assembly, who could have wished to have had such things said of him, as he said of me? Whether we are to look on the *Ninth Commandment* as an antiquated *Jewish law*, in the opinion of these *good Christians*, I will not say; but a more flagrant breach of it cannot well be committed, than by retailing such malicious lyes against the reputation of another; and when this is done in the *name of the Lord*, it is moreover a palpable and aggravated violation of the *third commandment*.

All that *twist* of the *thumbs*, that down-cast *look*, which, were I to coin a new word, I would call *Scythropism*.—See Matt. vi. 16—that—“ I am sorry to hear” — “ I am grieved to relate”—“ It has lain “ much upon my mind”—“ It has given “ me great uneasiness”—and such *prefaces* to this species of *gossiping*, by no means salve the matter; they make it *worse*; they bespeak a deep *hypocrisy*—for if the relator was really *sorry* to hear evil of others, he would not relate it, he would not let others hear it from him—if he was *sincerely* the friend of his fellow-creatures, so as to

be grieved as he ought at their faults, whether *real* or *supposed*, he would not wound them still deeper by publishing them to others.—But the truth is, there is a *malignity of heart* in the matter, which is gratified on these occasions. The man thinks that he can revenge the quarrel of his pride and bigotry, whenever he can hope to lessen the reputation of one that differs from his sentiments, in the eyes of those whom he wishes to engage on his side of the question. This sets him to listen after *slander* with greedy ears, like those in *Jeremiah* — *Report, say they, and we will report it* *. This makes him haste to divulge what he hears, wherever he can, in *pious* hopes that all will be believed, and all that hear become *partizans* for the relator's opinions.

Add to this, that a man seldom is eager to speak to the disadvantage of another, without some hopes of advancing himself in the opinion of those that hear him; for in the same proportion that he sinks another's consequence, he thinks to raise his own. — Now, whatever such a one may think of himself, it is very evident what God thinks of him; for it is a decided case in holy writ, that, *if any man seemeth to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but*

* Jer. xx. 10.

deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion
IS VAIN.

It would be a good rule to observe, that people should never speak of others, but as they would wish others should speak of them, or of their bosom-friends, or of their nearest and dearest relations. When they can say of others what is *good*, let them *speak*; when they cannot, let them be *silent*.

What a deal of *sin* and *mischief* would be avoided by these means!—At present, if *Mr. Sheridan* should wish to write a *second part* to his ingenious comedy of the *School for Scandal*, he has nothing to do but to attend such *meetings* as you speak of, and he will soon furnish himself with ample materials.

The latter part of your letter, and your observations, remind me of that exquisitely fine passage in Horace*:

—Unde petium

Hoc in me jadis? est auctor quis denique eorum
Vixi cum quibus? absentem qui rodit amicum;
Qui non defendit alio culpante; solutos
Qui capiat risus hominum famamque dicacis,
Fingere qui non visa potest; commissa tacere,
Qui nequit; hic niger est; hunc tu, Romane,
caveto.

Is there with whom I've liv'd, who know my heart,
Who taught you how to aim this venom'd dart?

* Sat. 4. lib. i.

He who malignant tears an absent friend,
 Or, when attack'd by others, don't defend;
 Who trivial bursts of laughter strives to raise,
 And courts of prating petulance the praise;
 Of things he never saw who tells his tale,
 And friendship's secrets knows not to conceal;
 This man is vile; here, ROMAN, fix your mark;
 His soul is black, as his complexion's dark.

FRANCIS.

My best wishes attend yourself and family. I am,

Yours, &c.

L E T T E R XXI.

To W. D. Esquire.

February 13th, 1782.

WHY will you endeavour to draw me into controversy with you, on points which have already been so fully considered, and relative to objections which have been raised by other people? You will bait me with what the *Monthly Reviewers* have said about the word *ιδιος*, and, with them, “positively assert, in opposition to all I “have laboured to prove, that *εαυτος* and “*ιδιος* are used indiscriminately by the sacred writers to express the same precise “idea.” You say, if I can “answer the “argument which they have derived in “support

“ support of their assertion, from Matt.
 “ xxv. 14. compared with Rev. x. 7. but
 “ particularly from Rom. viii. 3. com-
 “ pared with Rom. viii. 32. you will give
 “ me credit for answering all the rest, and
 “ will trouble me no farther.” Well—I
 accept the condition, and do positively de-
 clare, that I never will write you another
 syllable on the subject.

The position in *Thelyphthora* is, that “ the
 “ word *ιδιος* hath certainly an *emphatic*
 “ meaning wherever we find it, therefore
 “ must have its *emphasis* in this place *,
 “ as well as in others.” — In order
 to overthrow the *latter* proposition, they
 attack the *former*, and would deny that it
 ever is *emphatical* any where; ergo, cannot
 be so here.—They would have it but a
 mere *convertible* term with *εαυτος*, as they call
 it, “ and used indiscriminately by the sa-
 “ cred writers to express the same precise
 “ idea.” This I take to be the state of
 the argument, divested of all their sneer,
 abuse, and ill manners; which are con-
 cluded with — “ Blush, confidence! for
 “ here thou canst have no refuge, even in
 “ evasion!” — Perhaps, before I have done,
 you may be for turning this most indecent
 insult upon your favourite *critics*!

Imprimis. I would recommend it to

* 1 Cor. vii. 2.

these *heroes* in *criticism*, who are to set all the world right in their judgments on literature, to find out some school or academy, where *grown gentlemen* are taught *Greek*, and there to study the language till they understand it; they then will know, that there is no such word as *εαυτος* to be found; that *εαυτε*, *ης*, *ς*, is a pronoun wanting the nominative case. It is properly of the *third* person, but is sometimes used for the *second*, both by sacred and profane writers.

So here is a sad stumble at the threshold, which promises but a lame business of it, when we get into the *criticism* itself. In support, however, of this assertion, that *εαυτος* and *ιδιος* have the same precise idea, they cite many texts, though the *former* of the words exists no where but in the *Monthly Review*; yet, waving this, let us proceed to consider the principal texts referred to—"Matt. xxv. 14. compared with "Rev. x. 7. In the former text it is "said—Της ΙΔΙΟΥΣ δελας; in the latter, Της "εαυτε δελας."—"On the comparison of "these two texts, the reader will instantly "see the futility of an observation quoted "above," &c.—Say *Messieurs*.

First, for Matt. xxv. 14.

OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR, in a most solemn discourse with his disciples, which begins, ch. xxiv. 2. and continues to the end of ch. xxv. inclusive, is stirring them
up

up to watchfulness, and to a due use of those talents committed to their care, as specially entrusted to their diligent improvement. For this immediate purpose, he sets before them his departure from them, and their *responsibility* to him at the great day of account, when he should come to judgment, under that awful parable of the talents.

For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants (τὰς ἰδίᾱς δούλους) and delivered to them his goods: (v. 15) and unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability (ἐκαστῷ κατὰ τὴν ἰδίαν δύναμιν) and straightway took his journey, &c.

When he came to reckon with them, he applauded the improvement which *two* of them had made, and suitably rewarded it—As for the *third*, who had neglected to improve the talent committed to his care, and who made a foolish and impudent excuse for his sloth and unprofitableness—his Lord answered and said unto him, *Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed?—thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then, at my coming, I should have received mine own with usury.*

These

These *exchangers* — Τραπεζίται — were a sort of “public bankers, persons who made “it their business to take up money upon “small interest, and let it out at larger *.” These were servants to any body who would employ them.—The man in the parable is represented as not employing *such*, but as intrusting *those*, who, from their particular relation to him, as his *own peculiar servants*, would be more likely to consult his interest in the care and improvement of his property, than the public *exchangers* (Τραπεζίται) who, let who might employ them, would be more attentive to their own profit, than that of their employers: therefore, in contradistinction to *these*, it is said, that the man called *his own*, proper (ιδίος) *servants*, and delivered unto THEM *his goods*; not equally, but according to the *particular*, or *peculiar ability* of each to improve their value in interest.

Here is the adjective *ιδίος* used twice—first, with respect to the persons made choice of instead of the *exchangers*—who are *emphatically* therefore styled—Τῆς ΙΔΙΟΥΣ δούλους—his *own, peculiar, proper*, servants.

2dly. The division of the charge is as *emphatically* expressed to be—Κατὰ τὴν ΙΔΙΑΝ δύναμιν—according to the *PECULIAR* ability of each, or, as our translation has it, *to every man according to his several ability*.

* See Parkh. Gr. and Eng. Lex. Τραπεζίτης.

All this is expressed by *ιδιος*, and yet it is not *emphatical*!

3dly. Add to this, the consideration of the persons to whom, and concerning whom, this parable was *primarily* and *peculiarly* addressed—his *immediate* disciples, who are so *emphatically* styled ΤΟΥΣ ΙΔΙΟΥΣ ΤΗΣ ΕΝ ΤΩ ΚΟΣΜΩ—HIS OWN *that were in the world* *—who doubtless were meant to be represented by the faithful servants.

Wetstein, who, though unacquainted with the word *εαυτοσ*, was, notwithstanding, a most accurate critic in the *Greek* of the New Testament, and fully entered into the meaning and intent of the word *ιδιος*, Matt. xxv. 14. thus comments on it.

“*Idios*] Quos maxime ad hoc idoneos
“judicabat, et quos accuratius, & majore
“fide quam menfarios negotium gesturos
“esse sperabat.”—Which I render thus:

“*His own servants*] whom he judged
“to be most *fit* and *proper* for the pur-
“pose, and who, he hoped, would trans-
“act the business with more accuracy,
“and with greater fidelity, than the *ex-*
“*changers*.”

Yet *ιδιος* is not *emphatical*!—Why?—Mark, Sir, the reason!—Because, in Rev. x. 7. we are told, that—*In the days of the voice of the seventh Angel, when he shall be-*

* John xiii. 1.

gin to sound, the mystery of God shall be finished, as he has declared to his servants the prophets—Τοις εαυτῃ δουλοῖς τοῖς προφηταῖς.—Why *Messieurs* left out the word προφηταῖς—the *Prophets*—they know best—I know not, unless it was to keep “the reader from instantly seeing the futility of their criticism,” and that this sentence, and that in *St. Matthew*, had nothing to do with each other. However, let us consider their argument—it amounts to this—

The word ἰδὲς is found Matt. xxv. 14.

But it is not found, Rev. x. 7.

Ergo. It is not *emphatical* in Matt. xxv.

14.

Where these gentlemen learned their *Greek*, I will not pretend to say; but their *Logic* seems to have been derived from pretty much the same source with his, who held, that—“as a wheel-barrow goes rumbledy rumble, so one man owes another ther fixpence.”

This letter must now conclude: when I can write again, you shall hear more from

Yours, &c.

LETTER XXII.

To the same.

February 22d, 1782.

Dear Sir;

MANY hindrances have fallen in my way; which have prevented my finishing what was begun in my last: however, I now sit down to put a final end to all controversy between us on the word *idios*, as well as on every thing else relative to *Thelyphthora*.

The peremptoriness with which *Messieurs* assert, that *εαυτος* (let us call it *εαυτη*) and *ιδιος* “ are used *indiscriminately* by the “ sacred writers to express the same precise idea,” can only be equalled by their ignorance of the subject. In the first place, *εαυτη* and *ιδιος* are different parts of speech; the former is a *pronoun substantive*, and signifies *Himself, Herself, Itself*. *Idios* is a *noun adjective*, and cannot stand by itself without a substantive, either expressed or implied. To use these “ *indiscriminately*,” would make *excellent sense!* — Let us try. — The first text where we find the very word *εαυτη* is Matt. xii. 45. *Then goeth he and taketh with HIMSELF (μεθ' εαυτη) seven other spirits, &c.* What sense would *μεθ' ιδις* have here? So *πονηροτερα εαυτη*—more wicked than himself—

self—Would ἰδις do here as well as εαυτς? So in numberless other instances ἰδιος could not be put for εαυτς without downright nonsense. Nor could εαυτς stand for ἰδιος in many other places.—Ἰδιος signifies *one's own, proper*, always in a peculiar sense. So in John i. 11. He came to *his own* (εἰς τὰ ἰδία) and *his own* (οἱ ἰδιοὶ) *received him not*. What are we to understand by the ἰδία and the ἰδιοὶ here? Doubtless the *Jews*, his *own* covenant people, his *kindred according to the flesh* (Rom. ix. 3, 4, 5.) his *own* peculiar people, not only under natural, but special obligations to him. — Think you, Sir, that the Evangelist only uses ἰδιος here *indiscriminately* for εαυτς? So in that dreadful account of the traitor *Judas*, Acts i. 25, *Matthias* is chosen to *take part of that ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to HIS OWN place*—εἰς τὸν τόπον τοῦ ἸΔΙΟΝ. What an awful import has ἸΔΙΟΝ in this passage! Who that looks at it, and recollects Psal. cix. 6—19. but must shudder? Who, that has the least proper conception of the force of language, can ever imagine *St. Luke* to have had no particular design in this expression, but only an “*indiscriminate*” use of ἰδιον for εαυτς? So 1 Tim. vi. 15. Ἦν καί ποτε ἰδιοῖς δείξει — *which in his times he shall shew*, as we have rendered it;—but this is not the sense of the place; ἰδιοῖς here means, *fit, convenient*;

nient. *Chrysostom* explains it by προσήκειν—fit. What could εαυτε have to do here?—*Temporibus propriis*, Lat.—In its proper and appointed season. GUYSE.

Again—ιδιος signifies private, separate—thus it is used in the expression κατ' ιδίαν; χωρὰν, place, being understood: in a private place, privately, apart.—See Matt. xiv. 13, 23. & al.—εαυτε can have nothing to do here as a convertible term.

I hope, by this time, you begin to be satisfied that *Messieurs* are better railers than critics, and that the sacred writers do not “use εαυτε and ιδιος indiscriminately, as “having the same precise idea.”

I do not believe that the sacred writers, either in the *Old* or *New Testament*, ever wrote one word without design, or ever set down one expression at random for another; even if we can fix on two convertible terms, I will be bold to say, that wherever we find either of them, there is some reason for giving it the preference to the other; nor could we, were certain of the reading, change the word without weakening or injuring the sentence, either in sense or propriety:—men who spake as moved by the *Holy Ghost*, must be far beyond the reach of human correction, or paltry criticism; more especially, where it would charge them with writing without design, or, like

Gulliver's authors at *Laputa*, jumbling words *indiscriminately* together, and then taking that which comes uppermost.

But to return.—We now are to consider Rom. viii. 3. with Rom. viii. 32. “In “this last text,” the author of *Tbelyphthora* is charged with saying, “we meet “with a very material proof of the emphatic import of the word *Idios*, to denote “*Christ's* being God's *own, proper, son*, in “such a sense as no creature *is, or can be.*”

This is my indictment—on this I am arraigned—and do most heartily, and without reserve, plead GUILTY. I have therefore nothing left, but a motion in *arrest of judgment*, or rather a *writ of error* on the *judgment*. For, before I enter upon this, I must remind you of the sentence passed upon me by *Messieurs*—viz.,

“It is the peculiar infelicity of this “author,” say they, “to be most positive “where he hath the greatest reason to be “diffident; and to step forward, with an “air of *unblushing self-confidence*, to possess “the very ground that will not afford him “one inch of solid matter to rest his foot “upon: for, in the very chapter where he “finds *ιδιος* united to *υιος*, he might have “found *εαυτη* advanced to the same dignity, and standing in the same connection. See Rom. viii. 3. God sending “his

“ his *own* Son—τοῦ ΕΑΥΤΟΥ υἱοῦ. Blush,
“ confidence ! for here thou canst have no
“ refuge, even in evasion.”

Such is the *judgment*—such the *terms*—
such the *good-manners*, in which it is con-
ceived.

The *errors* which I assign are mainly
two.

I. The substitution of *insult* and *abuse* in
the place of *argument*.

H. A total misprision of the *Apos-
tle's* meaning, and reducing the most no-
ble and exalted piece of eloquence, that
tongue could utter, or pen describe, to the
level of *Messieurs* the *Monthly Reviewers*;
and this by destroying as fine a *climax* in
expression as words can form, on the bare
authority of an *English* translation.

As to the first *error*, it is not worth
notice—it is, however, apparent upon the
face of it ; but we will set it down as *com-
mon* with *Messieurs*, as the want of an *origi-
nal* and *warrant* of *attorney* are, in what
are called *common errors* in our courts of
justice, for which judgment is arrested of
course.

As to the second *error*. It arises from
the notion which *Messieurs* have conceived,
that *εαυτς* and *ιδιος* are convertible terms,
“ used *indiscriminately* by the sacred writers,
“ to express the same precise idea”—and

consequently, that is the case with *St. Paul* in this chapter.

You know, Sir, that *indiscriminate* denotes, “not *differentiated* or *distinguished*; — where “no *difference* or *distinction* is made.” — Therefore we are to understand, that this great and inspired orator, *St. Paul*, was so unacquainted with the force of language, and with the rules of *oratory*, as to vary a word in his *exordium*, for another in his *peroration*, but without any *distinction* or *difference* whatsoever, and if so, without any meaning or purpose.

The *eighth chapter* of the *Epistle* to the *Romans* is, perhaps, one of the finest pieces of eloquence the world ever knew, or that the *Bible* itself contains; its contents are disposed agreeably to every rule of true *oratory*. He first proposes the subject, plainly and briefly, in all that simplicity and plainness of words, which is most suited to possess the *understandings* of the hearers or readers with a true conception of the matter before them; — he confirms, with his arguments and reasons, the truth of what he lays down, thus gaining the approbation of the *judgment*; — and then, with an *apostrophe* to the passions and affections, that these may be stirred up, and the whole man subdued, by the *spirit and wisdom* of his speech — he breaks forth in all the fire of the most sublime eloquence; his language

guage glows, his expressions augment their force, and thus doth he commend himself to every man's conscience in the sight of GOD *.—
Ver. 31.—*What shall we say then to these things? — If GOD be for us, who can be against us? — He that spared not his OWN SON, but delivered HIM up for us all, how shall he not with HIM freely give us all things? &c. &c.*

That which in the *exordium* was—ΤΟΥ ΕΑΥΤΟΥ ΥΙΟΥ ΠΕΜΨΑΣ—*sending his Son*—glows in the conclusion, at ver. 32. into — ΤΟΥ ΙΔΙΟΥ ΥΙΟΥ ΕΚ' ΕΦΕΙΣΑΤΟ, ΑΛΛ' ΥΠΕΡ ΗΜΩΝ ΠΑΝΤΩΝ ΠΑΡΕΔΩΚΕΝ ΑΥΤΟΝ—*spared not his OWN, PROPER, Son, but delivered Him up for us all.*

Why was this change of expression? for the sake of a distinction without a difference? No, Sir, but (as *Tully*, in his book *De Oratore*, speaks of digressing in the conclusion or peroration) *ornandi & augendi causâ*—“to adorn and augment the force” of the application. But how could this be done, if *ιδίου*, at ver. 32, and *εαυτε* at ver. 3, are only used “indiscriminately to express the same precise idea?” They may just as well tell us, that *εκ' εφεισατο* is used *indiscriminately* for *πεμψας*.—In short, the *anticlimax* (for so I will call it) which they would charge on the *Apostle*, bespeaks them to be void of all taste as well as judgment—or, as

* 2 Cor. iv. 2.

Shakespeare says of *second childhood*—*sans taste, sans eyes, sans every thing!*

The mention of that great master of all human eloquence, *Shakespeare*, reminds me of a passage in his inimitable *OTHELLO*, which may well serve to illustrate this subject:—

—*Si parva licet componere magnis*—

BRABANTIO complains to the Senate, that his daughter *DESDEMONA* has been stolen from him. — The *DUKE* tells him—

“ Whoe’er he be, that, in this foul proceeding,
 “ Hath thus beguil’d your daughter of herself,
 “ And you of her, the bloody book of law
 “ You shall, YOURSELF, read in the bitter letter,
 “ After YOUR OWN sense; yea, though our PROPER
 “ SON
 “ Stood in the action.”

Now, Sir, if *Messieurs* should ever mistake their talents, so far as to attempt an edition of *Shakespeare*; which, after attempting a *critique* on *St. Paul*, may not be impossible; they will probably tell us, that “YOUR OWN
 “ SENSE” is a convertible term for—*your sense*; and that the word *PROPER*, means no more than if the *DUKE* had said, *my son*; that the *Poet* had no *design* in chusing the word *PROPER*, which exactly answers to *idiot*, and is only “ used *indiscriminately* to
 “ express

“ exprefs the fame precise idea” with—*my son*; which, if the verfe would permit, would do juft as well—and, indeed, *Shakeſpeare*, in feveral others of his *Plays*, writes, *my ſon—his ſon—your ſon*.—Therefore he muſt be underſtood to uſe PROPER SON “ *indifcriminately*.”

By the above comparifon of Rom. viii. 3, and Rom. viii. 32, I am reminded of Gen. xxii. 2,—thy SON—thine ONLY SON—ISAAC—WHOM THOU LOVEST;—where every change in the expreffion ſtrengthens and enforces the period.—So in Rom. viii. 3, and 32, *He ſent* HIS SON—He *ſpared* not his OWN PROPER SON—but DELIVERED HIM UP.—The *firſt* period is in the ſimple *narrative*—the two *laſt* in all the glow of *application*.

I have only to add, that I deſire you will look back to the former part of this letter, where the *judgment* on the author of *Tbelyphthora* is recorded—read it over, and ask yourſelf to whom it belongs.

As the *taste* of *Mefſieurs* is equally great and refined in *Hebrew*, as in *Grecian* criticism, I ſhall now leave them in full poſſeſſion of the field; inſiſting on your promiſe, never more to call upon me for another word of answer.

With reſpect to your “ Chapter of Conſequences,” as you call it—it only proves, that any thing, however right and good,

good, may be *abused*: What is out of the reach of this?—Not even the *Bible* itself.—*Voltaire* says, very truly——

“Ainsi chez les humains, par un abus fatal,
“Le bien le plus parfait est la source du mal.

For more on this subject, I refer you to *Thelyphthora*, preface, p. xv. 2d edit.—or rather let me refer you to *every day's* experience, as to *every thing* in this world.

I am,

Dear Sir,

Yours, &c.

P. S. You will observe, that *Messieurs* are led into their wrong conceits of *εαυτη* and *ιδιος*, by the implicit attention which they pay to one of the most faulty parts of our *English* translation; I mean, the rendering *different* words of the *original* by the *same* words in *English*. I have examined and compared all the texts which they mention on the subject of *ιδιος* and *εαυτη*, and they are so little to their purpose, as they stand in the *original*, that I should be ashamed to waste a single drop of ink more in the dispute.—Look into the *Latin* translations, and you will find them much more accurate than ours, in their rendering *εαυτη* and *ιδιος*—particularly Rom. viii. 3. 32. and 1 Cor. vii. 2. See *Leusden ex Ar. Mont.*

L E T T E R XXIII.

To the Same.

Feb. 28th, 1782.

Dear Sir,

AFTER the resolution in my last, of writing no more on the subject of it, you will be surprized to receive this; but, on recollection, I find that I omitted to mention, Rom. xiv. 4. where the *emphatical* meaning of *ιδιος* stands forth with a peculiar lustre, and where *εαυτε* could not be substituted without destroying the force and energy of the expression.

Who art thou that judgest
ANOTHER MAN'S SER-
VANT—*αλλοτριον οικετην*—
or rather, ANOTHER'S *ser-*
vant?—The whole context
shews, that not *man's*, but
God's *servants* are meant.

TO HIS OWN
PROPER MAS-
TER *he stand-*
eth or falleth.
ΤΩ ΙΔΙΩ Κυριω
σηκει η πιπτει.

Suppose we read it—

Who art thou that judgest
ANOTHER'S SERVANT?

TO HIS MAS-
TER *he stand-*
eth or falleth.
ΤΩ ΕΑΥΤΕ Κυριω.

Doth not the difference strike your mind immediately?—Doth not the change of the words introduce a flatness, a mere *Bathos* into the expression?—Hear it red to you, your ears must acknowledge—look at it,
your

your *eyes* must see it—*think* of it, but for an instant, you must *conceive* it;—and yet these *Messieurs*—these *Lynxes*, who can see so much farther into a *mill-stone* than other men, as to pronounce a man's arguments *futile* and *fallacious*, even before they examine the authorities on which they are grounded—these *critics* in *B-flat*, without a single *sharp* in their key—against all *sound* or *sense*, are for bringing a number of passages in scripture to prove, that Τῷ ΙΔΙΩ κυρίῳ—to HIS OWN PROPER *master* (for that is the meaning and force of the expression) might as well be expressed by Τῷ εαυτῷ κυρίῳ—his *master*—“εαυτῷ and ιδίῳ being used *indiscriminately* by the sacred writers!”

Though εαυτῷ, in a few instances, is rendered, by our *translators*, with the word *own* introduced, yet this is not *translation*, but *paraphrase*; there is no *own* belonging to it's *literal* interpretation, nor should it ever be introduced, because it tends to confound it with ιδίῳ, which literally does signify—*own, proper*.

The pronouns *meus, suus, tuus, vester*, &c. in *Latin*, can never be made *convertible* terms with *proprius*, without *spoiling*, by *weakening*, the expression.

Let us try with the prince of the Latin poets *Virgil*.—*Juno*, in order to engage *Æolus* against the *Trojans*, promises him the
most

most beautiful of her twice seven handsome nymphs in wedlock. She says,

Sunt mihi bis septem præstanti corpore *nymphæ*,
Quarum, quæ formâ pulcherrima, *Deïopeiam*
Connubio jungam stabili, PROPRIAMQUE dicabo.

“I have twice seven nymphs, excellent in beauty, the most beautiful of whom, *Deïopeia*, I will join to thee in firm wedlock, and consecrate her to thee as THINE OWN for ever.”

What think you of *tuam* (if the metre would bear it) *thine*—instead of PROPRIAM, THINE OWN—*proper*—*peculiar*?—which is here held forth by the strongest of all *possessory* terms, to intimate the *absolute property* which *Æolus* should have in *Deïopeia*, the rather to invite him over to *Juno's* purpose. Can you possibly believe, that the word PROPRIAM is not *emphatical*?—or would *Virgil* use it only *indiscriminately* for *tuam*—supposing (as I said) that the metre would bear it?

Twice seven, the charming daughters of the main,
Around my person wait, and bear my train;
Succeed my wish, and second my design,
The fairest, *Deïopeia*, shall be *thine*,
And make thee father of a happy line.

DRYDEN.

I transcribe this as a specimen, to shew, how cautious we ought to be, in forming our judgments of books, or of language, from *translations*, even from those which are *most* and *highest* in esteem.

The

The thoughts in the above, are most of them *Mr. Dryden's* OWN, as you will see by comparing his *version* with the Latin, or with the literal translation which I send you in humble prose. He has destroyed the spirit and energy of *Virgil*, in the only line that is like a *translation*, by changing the nervous *Pathos* of

Connubio jungam stabili, PROPRIAMQUE dicabo,
into the miserable *Bathos* of

—shall be *thine*.

It reminds one of *Racine's* making *Alexander* represent himself to his mistress, by way of gaining her affections——as

Le Conquerant de l'Univers—et votre Amant.

All this is still worse, if we consider *Juno* as the heathen goddess of marriage, to which, no doubt, the *connubio jungam stabili* alludes, in a very particular sense.

Let us now go to those inimitable lines, which *Octavia*, the sister of the Emperor *Augustus*, and mother of *Marcellus*, ordered to be so signally rewarded. Among these are found the following—where *Anchises* is supposed, with tears in his eyes, to foretel and lament the fate of young *Marcellus*.

*Tum pater Anchises lachrymis ingressus abortis :
O nate, ingentem luctum ne quære tuorum ;
Ostendent terris hunc tantum fata, neque ultra
Esse sinent—nimium vobis Romana propago
Visa potens, superi, PROPRIA hæc si dona fuissent.*

Seeh

*Seek not to know (the Ghost reply'd with tears)
The sorrows of thy sons in future years.
This youth (the blissful vision of a day)
Shall just be shewn on earth, and snatch'd away.
The Gods too high had rais'd the ROMAN state,
Were but their gifts as PERMANENT as great.*

DRYDEN.

This is a fine *version*, but it is not a *translation*: we lose the *INGENTEM luctum*. Here is again an instance of *Pathos* changed into *Bathos*: we have the *PRODIGIOUS GRIEF* of the *Roman* people represented as mere—*sorrows*.

We also lose the fine *Hyperbole* of the *ROMAN* power's seeming too great even in the eyes of the Gods themselves, as if they might have been jealous of it; and this introduced with that beautiful *apostrophe*—

——Nimium vobis *Romana* propago
Vifa potens, *SUPERI*, &c.

All this is sunk into—

The Gods too high had rais'd the Roman state.

The paraphrasing *PROPRIA hæc si dona fuissent*—into—

Were but their gifts as PERMANENT as great—

loses the meaning and force of the *original PROPRIA*. This conveys here an idea of having things—*so much*, so entirely *our own*, as to be solely under our *own disposal, power, management*. If this had been the case, *Marcellus* would not have died—the
great

great events which are mentioned would have come to pass—and ROME have been raised to such a pitch of *glory* and *grandeur*; as, “even unto you, O ye Gods, to have “seemed too great and powerful.”

The word PROPRIA is *emphatical*, almost beyond the reach of translation. What think you of supposing that *Virgil* only used it *indiscriminately* for *Nestra*? Render the last line into *Greek*; would εαυτς do as well for this emphatical PROPRIA, as the word ιδια? You could surely assign a reason why it would not—viz.—because ιδια is a stronger term, and approaches nearer to the force of the original PROPRIA—I rather should say—is a literal translation of it.

There are, perhaps, in all languages, what may be called *convertible* terms, or words which may be sometimes used *indiscriminately* for each other. For instance, in the Latin, *Magnus* and *Ingens* may, on some occasions, be used *indiscriminately*; but, on others, this would be highly absurd; the *latter* being a much *stronger* word than the *former*: for which reason *Virgil* doubtless says, INGENTEM *luctum*, hereby carrying the compliment to *Marcellus* to the highest pitch. An example of this also meets us in *TERENCE*, *Eunuch*. Act III. Scene I—

THRASO. MAGNAS vero agere GRATIAS
THAIS *mibi*?

GNATHO.—INGENTES.

Thraso.

THRASO. And THAIS then returns me many thanks?

GNATHO. *Ten thousand.*

COLEMAN.

Though this be the sense, yet it is not a translation of the passage. It is literally—

“THRASO. But did *Thais* return me
“ GREAT THANKS?”

“ GNATHO. IMMENSE.

So *Lucretius*, Lib. vi. ver. 677.

Maxima quæ vidit quisque, Hæc ingentia finxit.

Here *Ingens* is carried beyond the *superlative* degree of *Magnus*. Now, what *Ingens* is to *Magnus* in *Latin*, that I take *ιδιος* to be to *εαυτη* in the *Greek*; a strong augmentative, even considering it in a *synonymous* light, as holding the place of a *pronoun possessive*.

Can you then, Sir, imagine, that the *Apostle* should use *εαυτη* and *ιδιος* in the same verse, as he does 1 Cor. vii. 2.—or in the same discourse, as he does, Rom. viii. 3, and Rom. viii. 32—without meaning or design? “indiscriminately, to express the same precise idea?” You may just as well suppose, that *Virgil’s* use of the adjective *Proprius*, in the passages above cited, or *Terence’s*, and *Lucretius’s*, use of the adjective *Ingens*, are to be looked upon in the same predicament, because there is such a pronoun adjective as *Noster*, or *Suius*, and such a noun adjective as *Magnus*.

K

When

When the *Apostle* (Rom. xiv. 4.) says—that the servant *standeth or falleth* to HIS OWN MASTER—τῷ ΙΔΙΩ κυρίῳ—il se tient ferme ou il bronche pour *son propre* Seigneur, says a French translation—it certainly denotes such an appropriation of the master to the servant, as to render the servant *amenable* only to him, *responsible* only to him, *accountable* only to him—He *standeth or falleth* not by the judgment of *any other* than his own *proper lord and master*—*Proprio domino stat aut cadit*. LEUSDEN ex AR. MONT. I therefore am still of the same opinion, that this text is illustrative of the sense which I have given to the ἰδιος ἀνδρα, 1 Cor. vii. 2. as putting the *wife* in the same situation with regard to the *husband*, as this text puts the servant in with respect to the *master*: and therefore, that no other than her *own proper* husband ought to have any thing to do with her.

I might observe, that, in our English language, the *pronouns possessive*—*mine, thine, your, our, his, their*, are frequently augmented in their force by adding the word *own*; but yet, if used “indiscriminately,” this would make sad nonsense; and indeed, it never can be used, in strict propriety, but where, if we were to speak in *Greek*, we should say ἰδιος. You may easily try the experiment. You may bid your *butler* “clean *his* plate”—your *coachman* “look “after

“after *his* horses.”—The special charge over these, which arises from their being committed to the care of these servants, for these purposes, would make what you said very proper.—Now, introduce the word *own*, and you mar your speech at once. But suppose you found your *butler* busied in cleaning your *neighbour's plate*, your *coachman* employed in looking after the horses of your *neighbour*; then the word *own* would be right:—which instances may serve to shew, that the word *own* is not to be used *indiscriminately*—or, if you please, that εαυτη and ιδιος are not, properly speaking, *convertible* terms, “expressive of the *same precise idea*,” let our translation say so ever so often.

Having given you some classical instances, where the adjective *ιδιος*—*proprius*—*own*, *proper*—could not be changed for a *pronoun possessive*, without *weakening* and *spoiling the sense*; I can also give you a classical instance, where the *pronoun possessive* could not be changed for the *adjective Proprius*, without *spoiling the sense*, by *strengthening* the expression too much:—

Et genus, & proavos, & quæ non fecimus ipsi,
Vix ea NOSTRA voco—— OVID.

Here the NOSTRA, after *vix*, is the most proper term; the word *propria* (if the metre would have borne it) would have been too *strong*—“So far from *propria*—our

“ own, *peculiar* property — I scarcely can
 “ call the dignity derived from ancestors,
 “ or any thing else, that we ourselves have
 “ not atchieved, in the *smallest* sense —
 “ *nostra—ours.*” i. e. “ I can hardly allow
 “ that we have any thing to do with
 “ them.” I am most perfectly convinced,
 that no *correct* writer would ever confound,
 or use *indiscriminately*, *idios* and *εαυτης*, nor
 would any *correct translation* render them so.

I now conclude, with assuring you, that,
 however many *last words* I may receive
 from you on this matter, you will have *no*
more from
 Yours, &c.

P. S. After all this, what think you now
 of the *writer* of that weak and abusive *let-*
ter, which appears in *print* at the end of Mr.
 H.’s second pamphlet, and which has the
 following testimony in favour of *Messieurs*?
 —“ However, he (the *author* of *Thelyph-*
 “ *thora*) should cease his triumphing as a
 “ philologist, till he has answered the
 “ *Monthly Reviewers*. For, in the opinion
 “ of *many*, equal in classical knowledge to
 “ Mr. M. these *able casuists* have refuted
 “ *every argument* which he hath founded
 “ upon *biblical criticism*; and they have
 “ challenged him to a fair combat.

“ He may *affect* to treat their strictures
 “ with sovereign contempt: but under that
 “ lies concealed a dread to take up the gaunt-
 “ let;

“ let; of which they seem so justly convinc-
 “ ed, that they declare publicly, they look
 “ upon him as yielding them the palm.

These *critics* remind one of the old say-
 ing, “ That there are none so *low*, but they
 “ fancy there are others still below them.” —
Messieurs speak of an *inferior* order to them-
 selves, under the titles of NOMINAL *critics*,
 and “ *word-catchers*.” This *Gnathonic—Ego*
illum contempsi præ me—runs throughout all
 orders of men.

A gentleman, travelling late on the
 road, put up at an inn; having delivered his
 horse to the care of the *ostler*, he retired to a
 room, where he supped.—Preparing for bed,
 he rang the bell, and had the *waiter* send the
ostler to him—*John* appeared—“ Here, *ostler*,
 “ come and pull off my boots.” —*John Hos-*
key, with a countenance something like that
 of a *first* Lord of the Treasury, who should
 be ordered by one of the *clerks* to *mend* a *pen*
 for him—or like that of *Antient Pistol*,
 when he said (on *Falstaff*’s wanting him to
 bear his letter to *Mrs. Ford*)

“ *Shall I Sir Pandarus of Troy become,*

“ *And by my side wear steel? Then, Lucifer take all.*”

—or like any thing else which can best de-
 scribe *disdain* and *contempt*—*John* retired—
 clapping the door after him, and muttering—
 “ Where the D——I have you lived, not to
 “ know an *ostler* from a *boot-catcher* !”

Adieu.

L E T T E R XXIV.

To the Reverend Mr. E. K——,

March 4th, 1782.

Reverend Sir,

IF you will apply to your acquaintance Mr. G. he will shew you the * letter which I wrote to him some time ago; wherein I sent him my ideas of the “*Jewish law*,” as you call it. I certainly agree with you, that “*certain laws, which were delivered to the Jews by Moses, were of a local and temporary nature.*” Such, for instance, as immediately concerned their journeyings, and peculiar situation for *forty* years together in the wilderness; so, those which were adapted to maintain a distinction of their *tribes, families, and inheritances* in the land of *Canaan*, and the like; these were doubtless of the *local and temporary* kind. The *ceremonial law*, we are told, was a *figure for the time then present* †; and, having done its *office*, and received its final accomplishment, in the wonderful and glorious *realities* which it *prefigured*, is, as it was intended it should be in the *fullness of time*, *antiquated and vanished away* ‡.

But what has all this to do with *laws* which are evidently of a *moral* nature,

* See Letter XVIII. † Heb. ix. 9. ‡ Heb. viii. 13.

which

which are evidently to regulate the *manners* and *conduct* of men in their dealings with each other? and more especially to regulate and dispose that very *important* matter, which is not of a *local* and *temporary* kind, but the only means of propagating and preserving the whole human species? Was this to be left at large? Were *men* and *women*, and the *beasts* of the field, *rational*s and *brutes*, to be left on the same footing, without any law to controul their passions? No:—the most accurate, as well as positive and explicit *revelation* of the CREATOR'S mind was given by HIMSELF, and, in due time, committed to writing, and left on the indelible records of truth: there, each heavenly *statute* is to be found, as, in the highest sense, with respect to every *jot* and *tittle* of it, *Monumentum ære perennius*—none can *add* to it, nor *diminish* from it*.

Now, Sir, can you really suppose, that the “*Jewish law*,” as concerning these matters, “has nothing to do with *Christians*?” Does the New Testament any where tell you this? Or, do you really suppose, that the severe prohibition of *adultery*, and the wise provisions for the *security* of *seduced virgins*, were merely *local* and *temporary*? Were, or are, these matters only *local* and *temporary*? The *laws* relative to the gathering and dis-

* Deut. iv. 2.

posál of the *manna* ceased, when the *manna* ceased. And it must, on the same principle, be allowed, that, when there is no more danger of *adultery* or *seduction*, the *laws* against them, whether *punitive* or *preventive*, will have no more *use*. But, till then, surely all *sense* and *reason*, as well as *conscience* and *scripture*, must plead for their continuance. *Ubi eadem ratio ibi idem jus*—is a very sound maxim; and I believe it as applicable to the *Divine law*, among *Christians*, as among *Jews*.

I know you are a very strict churchman, and therefore, if *friend D—*, your *Quaker* neighbour, was to dispute against the *Divine right* of your *tithes* of *all his increase*, and tell you, that “this was only a *Jewish law*,
 “ made only for the provision and main-
 “ tenance of the *Jewish Priests* and *Levites*,
 “ but that *Christian Ministers* have nothing
 “ to do with *tithes*”—you would instantly talk to him about the *Levitical law*, as *permanent* with regard to the provision for *Ministers*;—you would tell him of *Abraham*, the father of the faithful, paying tithes to *Melchizedec*, 400 years before the giving of the law;—you would quote the *Apostle Paul*—*Who goeth a warfare at any time at his own charges? Who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or, who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock?*

Say

Say I these things as a man? or saith not the law the same also?

For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth GOD take care for oxen?

Or, saith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, &c.

If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things*?

Here is certainly a *Divine authority* for ministers being provided for by their people — and the *Jewish law* cited, as the *basis* of that authority.—As to the *quantum*, I should suppose you would urge a *tithe* as the nearest to, or rather as prescribed by, the *Divine law*, and thus justify the laws of our land, which give you your demand of your tithes from friend D——.

But if friend D—— be *right* in saying, that “these laws were only *local and temporary*,” and that “therefore *Christians* have “nothing to do with them”—how can we justify the *Apostle* in his quoting a law to the *Gentile converts*, the *Corinthian Christians*, with which “they had nothing to “do?”—Friend D—— may perhaps say unto thee, as another *Quaker* did once unto me, on my quoting to him the authority of *Paul* against women’s preaching—“Ay—

* 1 Cor. ix. 7—10.

“neighbour

“ neighbour — the *Apostle* doth say as
 “ much; but he might be mistaken.”
 But, allowing that the *Apostle* was not *mis-*
taken, it is very clear, that, in his opinion,
 as *Christian* ministers must *eat* and *drink*, as
 well as *Jewish* ministers, the *Law*, which
 made a provision for *these*, may be con-
 strued so as to make a provision for the
others also.

Now, Sir, in order to apply this to your
 position of “ *Christians* having nothing to
 “ do with the *Jewish law*.” Is not the
 propagation and continuance of the human
 species as *necessary* in *Christians* as in *Jews*?
 —Are not those *passions*, which are im-
 planted for that purpose, *common* to *both*—
 the *same* throughout all generations of
 men—*alike* at all times, and in all places?
 How then can you imagine, that those
laws, which are so evidently made to regu-
 late those *passions*, and to keep them within
 those bounds which were designed and pre-
 scribed by the *Creator*, should be only *local*
 and *temporary*, when the objects of them
 must, in the very nature of things, be *uni-*
versal and *perpetual*?

On *your* principles, what have *you*, or
 what has any body *else*, to do with that long
 catalogue of—“ Degrees of *affinity* and *con-*
 “ *sanguinity*, within which, persons are
 “ forbidden, by God’s *law*, to *marry* toge-
 “ ther?”—This, I think, is the title of
 that

that printed half-sheet of paper, which you have framed, and hung up in your vestry.—But what is all this to the purpose, if “*Christians* have nothing to do with the “*Jewish law*?” To what purpose are these *degrees* printed, and published at the end of our *common-prayer* books?—What is the law in *Leviticus* to us?—I, for my own part, answer, That God’s law is *every thing* to us.—I deny that there is any other *rule*, to determine the *lawfulness* or *unlawfulness* of any thing whatsoever in his sight, but his *own law*;—that which *this* hath prohibited is *sinful* to do, let who *may* authorize it.—That which *this* has *not prohibited*, is *not sinful*, though all the men upon earth should conspire to make it, or declare it, *to be so*.

If we consider through what hands our *system* relative to the *commerce of the sexes* has been derived, it is not to be wondered at, that the *Divine laws*, respecting the punishment of *adultery*, and the *prevention* of *prostitution*, have been so entirely laid aside, as to have become quite obsolete.—When vows of *celibacy* were established, and the *celibacy* of the *clergy* had passed into a law, still *something* was *left*, which was beyond the controul of all human power, viz. that *natural* adjunct to the human frame, wisely implanted by the God of nature, for the continuance of mankind. As this was
prevented

prevented from taking its *right* 'course, it soon made its way into many *wrong* ones; and, among others, that of forbidden lewdness, and debauchery of *other men's wives*.—

“ The unmarried state, both of *seculars*
 “ and *regulars*, gave infinite scandal to the
 “ world; for it appeared that the restrain-
 “ ing them from having *wives* of their
 “ *own*, made them conclude, that they
 “ had a right to *all other men's*; and the
 “ inferior *clergy* were *no better*.” *Burnet's*
Hist. Ref.—and see *Crit. Hist. of England*,
 p. 141.

Judge Blackstone, speaking of the *canon law* relative to incontinence, says, that
 “ it has treated *even adultery itself* with a
 “ great degree of tenderness and lenity,
 “ owing, perhaps, to the *celibacy* of its
 “ *compilers*.” The *temporal* courts, *therefore*,
 (i. e. having left it to the cognizance of
 the *canon law*) “ take no cognizance of the
 “ crime of *adultery*, otherwise than as a
 “ *private injury*.” *Blackst.* vol. i. 433.
 vol. iv. 64.

This accounts for God's law against *adultery* having been so long laid aside, and for its being totally disregarded as a *public offence*, punishable in our *criminal* courts of judicature. The first compilers of *church canons* would hardly be for enforcing a law, which would have made their *unnatural* and wicked schemes of
celibacy,

celibacy, so many *snare*s for their own *necks*.

As to *virgins*, which were likewise the objects of their lewd practices, the *seduction* of *these* could not be attended with *marriage*, for this was inconsistent with *holy celibacy*: therefore the laws of *Exodus* and *Deuteronomy*, which made the seduced *virgin* the *man's wife*, were to "have nothing to do with *Christians*."—This idea, by length of time, got an establishment in the minds of men; it has now the prescription of many ages to plead in its behalf—and God's most *positive laws*, for the preservation of *seduced virgins* from *desertion*, *prostitution*, and *ruin*, (though red over in the solemn service of our *church*) are supposed to have "nothing to do with *Christians*." Women are *seduced* and *prostituted* by thousands, *children* are *murdered*, men and women rotting with *disease*, the land filled with the most *wretched* and *desolated* objects—God has been so *gracious* as to send forth a law to prevent *all this*, even in a *political* and *civil* view—but "it has nothing to do with *Christians*," and so the *Christians* are to have nothing to do with *it*!—And so, Sir, leaving you to your reflections upon the matter,

I remain,

Yours, &c.

P. S. When you charge me with representing *Dr. Doddridge* as "an advocate for
"Polygamy,"

“*Polygamy*,” you greatly wrong me; as your own eyes will convince you, if you will read over *Thelyphthora*, vol. iii. 386, 387, where I only mention him, as “*modest*, and “*cautious in his expressions*” on the subject—at the same time, you will find a paragraph, cited from his comment on 1 Tim. iii. 2, in *his own* words, plainly shewing the very *contrary* to what you charge me with.

There is an *unfairness* in such charges as these, which is *inexcusable* to the last degree—and this, whether you *have*, or have *not*, red over the passage alluded to. If you have *not* red it, but only get it from *hearsay*, you are *inexcusable*, for not *examining*, as you *ought* to have done, the *book itself*, before you charged me with so iniquitous a thing as a *falsehood* on *my* part.—If you have *red* over the passage, and yet *so* misrepresent what I say—what is it on *your* part?—As to the matter of *concubinage*, there is a long quotation from *M. Bucerus* on the subject, in *Thelyphthora*, vol. i. p. 401. 2d edit;—and indeed, I might have produced *Dr. Doddridge* as of much the same sentiments with that learned *reformer*. For the Dr. (definition 49, p. 151.) explains *concubinage* “as a sort of
“*marriage*, in which the woman, by agree-
“ment between both parties, is to be con-
“sidered as a sort of servant in the family,
“and

“ and exprefs provision is made, that her
 “ children fhall not have fuch a right of
 “ poffeffion and inheritance, as the children
 “ of the *primary wife*.”

“ SCHOLIUM.

“ The taking a *concubine* during the *life*
 “ of another wife, is, generally at leaft, to
 “ be avoided: and it feems, that he who
 “ never marries any woman, but as a *con-*
 “ *cubine*, neither pays due refpect to the
 “ female fex, nor fufficiently confults his
 “ own happinefs, in a free and ingenuous
 “ friendship.

“ Yet perhaps, in cafe of a *second mar-*
 “ *riage*, where the children by a former
 “ wife are living, *concubinage* is not alto-
 “ gether to be condemned—If the *constitu-*
 “ *tion* of the country permit it.”

Had you found the above tranfcript from
 the learned and excellent *Dr. Doddridge*
 joined to that from *M. Bucerus*, (which
 you probably would have done, had I met
 with it in time) you then could not have
 truly charged me with representing the *Dr.*
 as an *advocate for concubinage*; but you
 may, if you please, represent him as *no ad-*
vocate againft it, in particular cafes—“ if
 “ the constitution of the country permit
 “ it.”

I muft take the liberty to add, that I
 think wilful *mifrepresentation*, and wilful
misquotation, are as wicked and malicious in
 literary

literary disputes, as *forgery* and *perjury* are in common life.

Any man may certainly *misunderstand* or mistake another; but *wilfully* to bring a *false charge*, is as bad, and dishonest, in *controversy*, as in any thing else.

L E T T E R XXV.

To the Rev. Mr. E——.

March 10th, 1782.

I N answer to mine of the 20th of November*, you tell me, that you “wish yourself to be as good a man as the *translation* of the *Bible* would make you.” —I have the same wish for myself:—and perhaps you need not wish to be an honest man, or a better citizen, than *Cockman’s translation* of *Tully’s Offices* would make you; But does this prove, that an acquaintance with the *original* is, therefore, needless, in order to judge of the style, spirit, and expression of the author, and to see, with your *own eyes*, what were his *real* sentiments, and whether they are, or are not, *faithfully* and *truly* represented?

You say, that, “we have many comments, expositions, &c. on the *Bible*, by men who did not understand *Hebrew*, and who had only the *English translation* be-

* See Letter XVI.

“fore them.”—Suppose that you could produce me as many comments, expositions, &c. on *Homer*, by men who did not understand *Greek*, or know any more of *Homer* than they could gather from translations—how could you, if you did not understand *Greek*, determine, with any certainty or satisfaction to yourself, that these gave you the true sense of the author? So with respect to our mere English *expositors*, they are *right* or *wrong* just as the *translation* leads them; and, in very many instances, set forth that as the word of God, which is only a mistake of the translators. This is but a precarious foundation for those to build upon who are to teach others; and therefore a *minister*, who contents himself under a total ignorance of the *original*, is inexcusable; if he suffers his ignorance to carry him so far as to scoff at those who study *Hebrew*, or to undervalue the *study* itself, I scruple not to say, that he acts very *wickedly*, and is, as our liturgy somewhere expresses itself—“an hinderer of “*GOD’s word*.”

Non cuius contingit adire CORINTHUM—

The situations and educations of the bulk of mankind are such, as to keep this study out of their reach; they *must* see, in a great measure at least, with the eyes of their *teachers*, and judge from *their* representations

sentations of things:—for this very reason, their *teachers* should take every method of informing themselves, that, when their *master* shall enquire, *Have ye understood all these things* *? they may say unto him, *Yea, Lord*;—that they may be *scribes instructed into the kingdom of heaven, and like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure—καινα και παλαια—things NEW and OLD*;—which I should suppose to refer to the *OLD Testament* and the *NEW*.

The learned *Dr. Cotton*, in his *Manu-ductio ad Ministerium*, cited by *Kettelby*, whom I mentioned in my former letter, says—
 “ Though with much more cause than the
 “ modest *Melancthon*, I may confess, *me*
 “ *vix primis labiis degustasse Hæbraicas li-*
 “ *teras*; yet, as he declared, what *Hebrew*
 “ he had, helped him so much in his judg-
 “ ment of the greatest matters, *he pre-*
 “ *ferred it before all the wealth of a king-*
 “ *dom*; so I may humbly declare, I scarce
 “ ever take an *Hebrew Bible* into my hands,
 “ but I am gratefully surprized with some-
 “ thing I never thought of; I ever have
 “ *some view*, and see something I never
 “ saw before. So that I do not wonder
 “ at *Luther*, for making a *serious* protesta-
 “ tion, that what knowledge he had of
 “ *Hebrew*, was of more use and price to
 “ him than the greatest *heap of gold*, that
 “ could be set before him.”

* Matt. xiii. 51.

I also,

I also, with still more cause than the *modest Dr. Cotton*, do confess, *me vix primis labiis degustasse Hæbraicas literas*; for I never looked into the language 'till within these last *six* years; yet, I would not be without the *little acquaintance* I have with it, on any consideration which this world could offer me in exchange for it. But what avails such a poor worthless testimony as mine, after what so many great men have said on the subject? Yet, may I not say, that one testimony of our Lord and Saviour leaves all the rest at an immeasurable distance?—ΕΡΕΥΝΑΤΕ ΤΑΣ ΓΡΑΦΑΣ—
SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES. What are these SCRIPTURES—the ORIGINAL, or a TRANSLATION?

But why need I spend any more time on a *self-evident proposition*—for, can the *sun* itself be clearer at *noon-day*, than, that we never can understand *any book*, so well in a *translation* as in the *original*? How can he be said truly to love and value the word of God, who does not wish and endeavour, by every means in his power, to cultivate the knowledge of it? *The queen of the south shall rise in judgment against such a one; for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold a greater than Solomon is here* *.

I could this moment point out to you a

* Matt. xii. 42.

misfortune, which you labour under from an unacquaintedness with the *Hebrew Bible*; which is, that of resting (and in a very positive manner) arguments on foundations which will not bear them. You say, for instance, that “the *οἱ δύο*—*they twain*—“ Matt. xix. 5. is so conclusive a proof, “ that, in the very original, the primary “ law, and institution of marriage, it was “ ordained *totidem verbis*, that *two* and *no* “ *more* should ever be joined together at a “ time;—that these *two* words are a full “ answer to all that is said on the subject “ throughout the whole *three* volumes of “ *Thelyphthora*;”—you mention *several commentators* in support of your assertion, and “ defy me to give it a fair unequivocal “ answer.”

In the first place, my good Sir, I most certainly do grant, that *οἱ δύο* signifies—*the*—or—*these, twain*;—but the words “ *and no more*,” are an addition of yours, and of your *appellees* the *commentators* which you mention—therefore they are no part of the *text*, and prove nothing, but the small regard which is paid to that *positive* command—Deut. iv. 2. and Deut. xii. 32.—not to *add* to the word of God. If men were allowed to do this, there would be an end of all scripture authority.

In the next place, our *Saviour* can scarcely be supposed to have spoken to the *Jews* in
in

in *Greek*. He, as we find he spake to the persecuting *Saul* * afterwards, must be supposed to have spoken εν Εβραϊδι διαλεκτω †—
in

* Acts xxvi. 14. comp. Acts xxi. 40.

† “ Our Lord (as Bishop *Wettenhall* justly observes)
“ did not himself make use of the *LXX*, or, as far as
“ can be proved, of any other *Greek version* imaginable ;
“ but spoke a language, which in the New Testa-
“ ment is called *Hebrew*, and preached to the *Jews*
“ therein ; and consequently the citations made by
“ him from the *Old Testament* were in the *original*
“ *Hebrew*. And it is plain from the *Acts of the Apostles*,
“ that they and their *assistants*, when they preached to
“ the *Jews*, used the *Hebrew* tongue.

“ The main body of the *Jewish* nation persisting
“ in infidelity, and the Gospel designing the *call* of the
“ *Gentiles*, it was necessary that the New Testament
“ should be written in *another language*, than that
“ wherein either the doctrine of the *Old* was first re-
“ corded, or the *doctrine* of the *New* was at first
“ preached.

“ The *Greek* language was then dispersed almost,
“ over the whole world, while the *Latin* and other
“ tongues were confined within their own scanty
“ limits, as *Cicero* observes, in his oration for *Archias*
“ the Poet ; and therefore *Greek* was the fittest lan-
“ guage for the promulgation of the glad tidings. And
“ on this occasion was the New Testament written
“ in *Greek*. From whence it appears, that, the true
“ state of your question is this — *Why did the sacred*
“ *penmen, when they wrote the New Testament, make use*
“ *of the Greek version of the Old, called the LXX?* To
“ which I may make this short answer, *For the same*
“ *reason that they made use of the Greek tongue,*” i. e. as
that best known, and commonly received.

“ The quotations from the *LXX* were sufficient
“ for the *Gentiles*, and could be justly liable to no
“ objections upon account of being taken from that
“ *version* ; whereas the New Testament would have

in the *Hebrew tongue*—therefore he could not say *οι δυο*; and if we look at the original *Hebrew* of Gen. ii. 24, we shall find no trace of any words for *οι δυο*—the text is literally—*They shall be as one flesh*—*εἰς σαρκὰ μίαν*.

The words *οι δυο* are inserted by the LXX in their translation of Gen. ii. 24; and why the sacred writers of the New Testament have, in so many passages, quoted the LXX translation, which so frequently differs from the *Hebrew Text*, instead of giving us the literal meaning of the *Hebrew*,
may

“ lain under great disadvantages and objections, had
“ not the quotations been generally taken from the
“ LXX, because the *writers* might have been charged
“ with translating on purpose to serve their *own turn*;
“ a charge, which, by making use of that *currently*
“ received translation, they entirely refuted, and si-
“ lenced all such objections. SPEARMAN’S Lett. on
“ the LXX translation, p. 355, 356, 357, 358.

—“ But give me leave to ask, What is the method,
“ which you would have had the *scribes* of the New
“ Testament to have pursued? would you have had them
“ cited the *original Hebrew* texts of the Old Testa-
“ ment? This would be still referring us to the *Hebrew*,
“ which in effect is doing no more than they have al-
“ ready done, by citing the LXX translation, since,
“ as above observed, we can go directly to the *He-*
“ *brew*.” Ib. p. 372.

“ Nay, I am inclined to think, that this method,
“ far from being of any real use or service, would, on
“ the contrary, have been of fatal consequence. For,
“ after the *Greek* came to be a dead language, such
“ *apostolical* translations of the *Hebrew*, would be liable
“ to

may be supposed a very difficult point to solve; but so it evidently *is*, in this place of Matt. xix. 5. as in various others. They certainly could not intend to stamp a *Divine* authority on a *faulty* translation. The best account, which I have ever met with of this matter, you may find in our *translators* preface to the *English Bible*—and in the late *Mr. Spearman's* learned letters on the LXX translation, a book which will well repay your pains in reading it.

We certainly are not to alter or correct the *original* by a *translation*; therefore, till this can be lawfully done, all your “con-
“ clusive proofs,” from the words *οι δὲ*—

“ to whatever constructions ignorant friends, or mali-
“ cious enemies, might put upon them; and there
“ would be no test or standard to which we might
“ bring them. The meaning of the *Hebrew* could
“ not be produced in evidence, because the *Greek* would
“ be the translations of the *Hebrew* by *inspired* pen-
“ men: and thus the world have been left to its end,
“ to dispute about the meaning of words in a language
“ which had not the same advantage of being under-
“ stood which the *Hebrew* hath, as *Dr. Taylor* has
“ shewn in the preface to his *Hebrew concordance*.”

Ib. 374.—Confer p. 8, note.

“ Dean *Prideaux* well observes (*Connect.* vol. ii.
“ p. 576)—In all the laws in the world, the words
“ of the *original* text are to be depended upon, for the
“ intention of the lawgiver, before any *quotations* of
“ them, by *whosoever* made.” Ib. 399.

See Ib. 423, the extract from *Bp. Pearson*.

they two—or in your commentatorial paraphrase—*they two, and no more*, “in the primary law—*totidem verbis*,” &c.

——— *dissolve,*
And, like the baseless fabric of a vision,
Leave not a wreck behind.

The proposition which runs through the two first volumes of *Thelyphthora*, and which is professedly undertaken to be proved in the third volume, is—that marriage, and all things belonging to it, have been taken out of God's hands into the hands of men; who, regardless of the Divine law, have, from time to time, invented, and imposed their own systems on their fellow-mortals.

You are at full liberty to examine the long chain of evidence which is produced in proof of this: cross-examine the witnesses, confront them as you please, you will still find them all in the same story; and, I think, that they are abundantly confirmed by the very system under which we are living to this hour, more especially since the passing of the marriage-act.

There is a wonderful propensity in mankind to be wise—*Vain man would be wise**, &c.—and, rather than fail, he will be wise above what is written; but there are few things that more coincide with this humour, than the invention of *final causes*;

* Job xi. 12.

and

and nothing makes a man so *wise* in his own conceit as seeming an adept in *these*.—We hear of one who found out, “that the
“ *nose* was put in the *middle* of a man’s
“ face, and raised in a ridge, on purpose
“ that he might wear spectacles to help
“ his eye-sight as he grows old.”—This has just as much *scriptural* foundation, as, that “but *one man* and *one woman* were
“ *created at first*, in order to * prohibit *Poly-*
“ *gamy* :”—and indeed, in all the practice of it throughout so many ages, we do not find a single *hint* of any such thing ; which could hardly have been, if this practice had counteracted *the design*, and had even militated against a *primary, positive law*, of the God of nature.

* *Mazdak the Persian*. who lived in the 6th century, in the reign of *Khofru Kobâd*, pretended himself a prophet sent from God, to preach a *community of women*, and of *possessions* ; since all men were *brothers*, and descended from the *same common parents*.

Kobâd himself embraced the opinions of this *impostor*, to whom he gave leave to *have the queen* his wife : which permission, *Anushirwân* his son, with much difficulty, prevailed on *Mazdak* not to make use of.

When *Anushirwân* succeeded his father *Kobâd*, he put *Mazdak* to death, with all his followers. See *Sale Alcor*. Prelim. Disc. p. 36, 37.

By the above we may see, that, when men set upon *invention of final causes*, they may fall into direct *contrarieties* ; and yet, however strange these may be, they will not be without followers of their *opinions*, on each side.

But

But when we consider the *two great subjects of revelation*—the *fall* of man—and his *redemption*—the *one* the foundation of the *other*—we shall find these so intimately connected with the circumstance of but *one man* and *one woman* being created at first, and thus becoming the common parents of all men, the common roots from whence they all should be derived, as streams from the fountain head, that we shall be led to a *final cause*, of such importance, as will at once account for the existence of but *one man* and *one woman* at first:—had there been *more*, how could it ever have happened, that—by *one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, &c.*—*In Adam all died, &c.*—*By the offence of ONE, judgment is come upon all men to condemnation—&c. &c. &c.?*

I just throw out these *hints*, to lead you from the groundless suppositions of men, to the *weighty reasons* which most clearly appear, and which may be gathered throughout the *scriptural* account of the matter.

What, think you, can have made *Voltaire*, and other *Infidels*, so zealous to promote the notion of *Præ-Adamites*, or *Co-Adamites*? and to argue for the creation of numbers of human beings, either *before Adam*, or together *with him*? The reason is this—Because the *whole* foundation of *Christianity*, as revealed in the *Scriptures*, both of Old and New Testament, must
 2 depend

depend on that *single fact*, the creation of only *one man* and *one woman* at first:—the *fall* in the first *Adam*, and the *redemption* in the *second*, must stand or fall with *this*; overturn *this*, therefore, and all the rest is as *absurd* and *impossible* as even *Voltaire* himself could have wished it.—Here, then, is an *adequate cause*, a *weighty*, a *scriptural* cause—*Causa sine qua* the whole fabric of the *Bible* falls at once into ruins.—The *other* has not any existence but in the inventions of men, nor any other importance but what their *prejudices* have given it—these, it must be owned, have been sanctified by

CUSTOM, that does still dispense
An universal influence ;
And makes things right or wrong appear,
Just as they do her liv'ry wear. HUD.

Therefore there is no more to be said for it, than may be said for any other commonly-received vulgar error—people *bear* of it, and *speak* of it, till they *believe* it;—but this does not add a *single grain*, either to its *solidity* or to its *truth*.

I am,

Reverend Sir,

Yours, &c.

LETTER

L E T T E R XXVI.

To the Reverend Mr. O——.

April 27th, 1782.

Reverend Sir,

I Received your long "*dissertation*," as you call it, on *Thelyphthora*:—it appears to me built on some capital mistakes; one is, that it *makes void the law of God through men's traditions*; for, as sure as the *Bible* contains an authentic record of what passed at *Mount Sinai*, so surely did the God of heaven fix the *seduced virgin* on the *seducer*, so that he could never *put her away all his days*. Your *partial* allowance of this, and your presuming most definitively to make *distinctions* where the *Bible* has made none, do not appear to me quite consistent with the "*profound, implicit, and unreserved submission*," which you profess "*to the oracles of God*."

In the next place, your idea, that "*it would encourage licentiousness, if the Jewish plan*," as you call it, "*was to be adopted*," is not quite so *respectful* to the *great Author* of it. Nor is it true in point of *fact*, that punishment must encourage *vice*.—But, in point of *argument*, you might as well tell us, that "*bits put into*
"*horses*

“ *horses mouths* are of *no use* whatsoever ;
 “ they rather encourage the horses to run
 “ away with their riders, and therefore it
 “ would be better to ride without any *bit*
 “ or *bridle* at all.”

Something very like *this* do your arguments tend to prove, by preferring the present *system* of *irresponsibility*, which custom has established between the *seducer* and the *seduced*, to those most righteous and equitable *statutes*, founded on the highest principles of *retributive justice*, contrived by the *Divine Wisdom*, promulgated on the *Divine authority*, and so exactly adapted to prevent those *evils* which are otherwise *irremediable*.

I believe, that, if you could trace the *mischiefs* of *prostitution*, through the whole history of but *one* deserted and desolated *female* ; could you but be acquainted, not only with all the shocking scenes of ruin brought on *herself*, but also with those which *hundreds* of *others* may be involved in by her means ; and which are, no doubt, realized in every day's sad experience ; you would find it more difficult, than you appear to do at present, to name a subject more worthy the deepest attention of *government*—or a distress, incident to human nature, that calls more loudly for a *remedy*. You would also be apprized of that *preventive* mercy to the *weaker sex*, which breathes
 in

in every word of those *Divine statutes*, which you have been considering as *old* and *vanish-
ed away*; as if the *Creator* had ordained *pro-
tection*, and established it by *law*, at one pe-
riod of time: but that, for the future, *danger*,
distress, *desolation*, *destruction*, and *ruin*, should
be let loose upon the earth, like *leviathan*
in the waters, to *take their pastime therein*;
or, like so many emancipated *fiends*, to go
about, seeking whom they may devour.

I agree with you, that “these *laws* could
“ not be adopted among us, without *over-
“ turning the present system* :” but, if the
present system be a *bad* one, the sooner it is
overturned the better.—No *reformation* can
ever take place, without *overturning the system*
which it is to succeed.—Was not this the
case at the *Protestant reformation*? And is
it not of the very *essence* of *all reformation*,
that it should be so, whether it respects
particular individuals only, or a whole na-
tion collectively?

You must excuse my entering any far-
ther into the subjects of your “ *disserta-
“ tion* ;” and believe me,

Yours, &c.

L E T T E R

L E T T E R XXVII.

To the Rev. Mr. —.

May 17th, 1782.

Dear Sir,

I HAVE looked into *Josephus*, and find the matter as I stated it, in the passage which I referred to by memory ; and which I translate as follows, referring you to the *original* for my correction, if wrong.

JOSEPHUS *Antiq. Lib. xvii. c. 1. § 2.*
 “ He (*Herod*) betrothed the daughter of
 “ *Pheroras* to the eldest son of *Alexander* ;
 “ but the daughter of *Antipater* he be-
 “ trothed to the son of *Aristobulus*. One
 “ daughter of *Aristobulus* he engaged to the
 “ son of *Antipater* ; but another of the
 “ daughters of *Aristobulus* to his own son
 “ *Herod*, whom the King had had by a
 “ daughter of the *High Priest* ; for it is a
 “ custom among us, derived from our fore-
 “ fathers, to cohabit with more wives than
 “ one at the same time : ” — πατριον γαρ εν
 ταυτω πλειοστιν ημιν συνοικειν.

After this, who can, with any reason, suppose, that the *Jews*, in our *Saviour's* time, were not *polygamous* ?

Josephus was born in 37, and died in 93, aged 56 years : so that his authority, in this case, must be unquestionable.

You will observe that our *Blessed Lord*,
 in

in his dispute with the *Jews*—Matt. xix. 3—9—says nothing *about* (therefore certainly nothing *against*) their—*συνοικησις*—*cobabitation* with *more wives* * than *one* at a time; this he left as he found it: but what He condemned, was, their monstrous *abuse of divorces*, by *repudiating one wife* in order to *take another*—which was directly contrary to the *Divine law*, not only as it stands in the *primary* institution, Gen. ii. 24. but as it is *positively* laid down, Exod. xxi. 10. and likewise, as it must tend to *cause the wives so put away, to commit adultery with other men* (compare Matt. v. 32) and thus be introductive of every mischief

* A late ingenious writer observes—“It is this circumstance, viz. the facility of men’s divorcing their wives at pleasure, that accounts for the non-usage of *Polygamy* in countries where it was allowed by law. The antient *Romans* did not indulge themselves in it, though permitted: but this was for a good reason; they wisely chose not to have two wives in the house at the same time, and therefore *repudiated one* before they took another; and this they did as often as they pleased, with no other formality than sending a message to the wife by a slave, giving notice of their intention, &c.”

Free Thoughts on Seduction, &c. p. 150. n.

This fashion of *repudiating one-wife* before they took another, very clearly appears to have obtained among many of the *Jews* in *our Saviour’s* time; which may account for our reading, in the *New Testament*, nothing about their *cobabitation* with more wives than *one at a time*—and also may serve as a *key* to *our Lord’s* discourse on the subject of *Divorces*, which was most evidently levelled against this infamous abuse of them.

provided

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provided against by the *Seventh Commandment*, and by every other law against adultery.

It should be remembered, that the *Hillellians* taught the lawfulness of *divorce* for almost any cause, and, among others, “if the husband saw another woman he liked better than his own wife.” To establish the authority of the *Divine law* of *cohabitation*, against the infamous breaches of it, which the *Jews* allowed and practised, was the main drift of our *Lord's* reasoning on the subject, in answer to the question proposed to him by the *Pharisees*, ver. 3. See more of this, *Thelyphthora*, vol. i. p. 82, 83, 2d edit.

I remain,

Dear, Sir,

Yours, &c.

L E T T E R XXVIII.

To the Reverend Mr. O——.

May 18th, 1782.

Dear Sir,

I Confess, that the conclusion of my last was rather, as you say, “*abrupt*”—but what have you and I to do with disputing about *canon laws* and *ecclesiastical courts*? I heartily wish them sent back to the place from whence they came: my rea-

M

sons

sons for this I shall not repeat, as they are given so much at large in *Thelyphthora*, vol. iii. 284 — 293. — To these I may add a *paragraph*, which appeared in the *Morning Post* of yesterday, and which seems to have been inserted by somebody, who is as *firm* a friend to these *inquisitorial* jurisdictions as I am. It runs thus—viz. “The following fact must convince
 “ every reader, that, notwithstanding the
 “ boasted laws of humanity in the Eng-
 “ lish constitution, still there are some at
 “ this time existing, which would disgrace
 “ the most arbitrary government upon
 “ earth.

“ In the year 1740, *Grace Hooper*, of the
 “ parish of *Parkham*, in the county of *De-*
 “ *von*, had a dispute with the parson’s
 “ wife, about a right to a seat in the
 “ church; and a cause was instituted in
 “ the *Chancellor’s* court in the diocese of
 “ *Exeter*. In *Michaelmas* term, 1741, Mr.
 “ *Onesiphorus Sheere*, the *Attorney* employ-
 “ ed by *Grace Hooper*, arrested her for
 “ 13*l.* being the costs due to him for bu-
 “ siness done, and she was committed to
 “ the county prison; and an *excommunicato*
 “ *capiendo* being lodged as a detainer against
 “ her, she has not been able to obtain
 “ her discharge by any insolvent act, but
 “ still remains in that prison (upwards of
 “ FORTY YEARS an inhabitant) without
 “ hopes

“ hopes of relief. As this story is well
 “ known to many members in a certain
 “ assembly, it is hoped she will be li-
 “ berated by a clause in the insolvent
 “ act, now preparing to be laid before Par-
 “ liament.”

This seems to be related with such an air of authenticity, as to leave no doubt of the fact—I therefore leave it with you, as one of those numberless proofs, which might be given, of the tyranny and cruelty of these *papal* and *anticristian* jurisdictions, and how inimical they are, in their very nature and institution, to the rights and liberties of mankind. What has happened to this *poor woman*, might happen to any body else, who is guilty of the *unpardonable sin* of not being able to pay more than they happen to be worth, in order to save themselves, not only from *forty* years imprisonment, but from *pains* and *penalties* attending the *excommunication*, which are too horrible for any thing but a *professed* inquisition to inflict; such as are unknown to the *civil* jurisdiction of this country—and would never have been known at all, but for the insolence, tyranny, ambition, and avarice, of the *Pope* and his *clergy*.

I am,

Dear Sir,

Yours, &c.

P. S. You are angry with me for comparing (in *Thelyphthora*, vol. iii. p. 9.) some “ of the stories of the *antient Fathers* to “ *Mother Goose’s tales*”—I think that I did them *too much honour* : these little innocent *apologues* may have useful *morals* drawn from them, and pretend to nothing but what they are ;—the others are of all *lyes* the *worst*—PIOUS LYES—tending to blind the *understanding*—to mislead the *judgment*—to enslave the *conscience*—invented by *knavery*, and believed by *credulity*.—I wish you would read JORTIN’S *Remarks on Ecclesiastical History*. See *Thelyphthora*, vol. i. p. 285, n. 2d edit.

EPILOGUE,

E P I L O G U E.

O NCE on a time, when beasts could speak,
 (PHÆDRUS says—Latin—ÆSOP—Greek)
 The Lion, Sov'reign o'er the rest,
 Assembled, to his throne, each beast
 That rang'd in field, or haunted wood:
 His royal mandate all obey,
 Did homage in their sev'ral way,
 And at his call attentive stood.

Quoth he, “ I’m told that some of you,
 “ (And I’m inclin’d to think it true)
 “ Of late have oft been heard to say
 “ Some saucy things ’gainst beasts of prey:—
 “ That blood and rapine are their trade,
 “ By laws which they themselves have made:—
 “ That creatures should not hurt each other,
 “ But each from harm protect his brother:—
 “ That ev’ry wrong should be redress’d,
 “ Nor, by the strong, the weak oppress’d.

“ Now this, in our supreme opinion,
 “ Is levelling at our dominion;—
 “ Is making novel alteration,
 “ Tending to ruin the whole nation.
 “ From henceforth, therefore, be it treason,
 “ For any at this rate to reason,
 “ Or to arraign our sovereign right
 “ To massacre, by day or night.”

He

*He shook his mane, he stretch'd his jaws,
His eye-balls flash'd with self-applause.*

*The Tyger, Wolf, each bloody imp,
Quite down to Jack, the Lion's pimp,
Highly applaud the monarch's plan,
And said, it was transcrib'd from MAN.*

*" True," quoth the Lion, " MAN may stray,
" And ruin thousands ev'ry day :
" No laws to curb his will he knows ;
" Where lust or fancy leads—he goes.
" Youth, innocence, and beauty—all—
" Before th' insatiate Tyrant fall ;
" These are his victims—daily made—
" Tempted with gold—by wiles betray'd :
" Then left; where they lament, too late,
" Their sad, inevitable fate.
" Friends, Parents, Husbands, all in vain,
" With bleeding bosoms, tell their pain.*

*(" Reynardo thus, in dead of night,
" Assails the quiet hen-roost's height ;
" Or frisks it to the common green,
" There catches, kills, and eats unseen ;
" And, though he cannot pick the bones
" Of more than one poor Goose at once,
" Yet oftentimes our loving Cousin,
" For fancy's sake, will slay some dozen.
" The Farmer's hope, the Housewife's care,
" One undistinguish'd ruin share.")*

" But

“ *But should a CAITIFF e'er pretend*
“ *T' appear the helpless Female's friend,*
“ *To mention laws, as made to bind*
“ *The wandrings of the savage mind ;—*
“ *To rescue, from th' oppressor's pow'r,*
“ *The wretched victims of each hour ;—*
“ *To fix, upon each shrewd deceiver,*
“ *The objects of his lust—FOR EVER ;—*
“ *Tongues, pens, and presses, all would join,*
“ *To tear him for his vile design :*
“ *Some would cast out his name as evil,*
“ *And some—consign him to the Devil.”*

The flocks and herds in silence slunk away,
Dreading the fell decision of the day.

The rest retire—each to his sev'ral den,
Proud to be told, they think and act like MEN.

F I N I S.



